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**WEAR-DOWN HOLDS**

1. Airplane spin
2. Arm drag
3. Arm lock
4. Asian spike
5. Atomic drop
6. Bear hug
7. Bite
8. Body slam
9. Body tackle
10. Bulldog
11. Chicken wing
12. Choke slam
13. Claw
14. Clothesline
15. Cross body block
16. Double axehandle
17. Drop kick
18. Eagle split
19. Elbow smash
20. Eye gouge
21. Face rake
22. Fireman's carry ram
23. Flying body press
24. Flying clothesline
25. Flying drop kick
26. Flying elbow drop
27. Flying head butt
28. Flying mare
29. Forearm smash
30. Foreign object
31. Full nelson
32. Giant swing
33. Grapevine
34. Hair pull
35. Hammer lock
36. Head lock
37. Head stomp
38. Hip roll
39. Irish whip
40. Knee drop
41. Leg lock
42. Leg sweep
43. Manager interference
44. Monkey flip
45. Overhead toss
46. Pole ram
47. Reverse chin lock
48. Rolling scissors
49. Rope burn
50. Russian sickle
51. Savate kick
52. Scissors grip
53. Shoulder breaker
54. Slingshot
55. Snap mare
56. Step-over toe hold
57. Suplex
58. Surfboard
59. Turnbuckle smash
60. Wrist lock

**SET-UP HOLDS**

61. Abdominal stretch
62. Avalanche
63. Backbreaker
64. Backroll press
65. Belly to belly
66. Big splash
67. Boston crab
68. Brain buster
69. Camel clutch
70. Cobra clutch
71. Cradle
72. Crucifix
73. DDT
74. Figure four
75. Flying leg drop
76. Gourd buster
77. Hurricanrana
78. Moonsault
79. Neckbreaker
80. Piledriver
81. Power bomb
82. Power slam
83. Scorpion deathlock
84. Sleeper
85. Slingshot suplex
86. Spine buster
87. Stunner
88. Sunset flip
89. Superplex
90. Texas cloverleaf

YOUR NAME (PRINT NEATLY)

STREET ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE

WRESTLER'S NAME (DO NOT USE ANY REAL PRO WRESTLER NAMES)

WEAR-DOWN HOLDS: *Choose 10 of the holds at the left numbered 1-60. Only use a hold once.*

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____

SET-UP HOLDS: *Choose 5 of the holds at the left numbered 61-90. Only use a hold once.*

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

FINISHING HOLD: *Create your own custom final maneuver or choose a hold from our list.*

# from the desk of...

WHEN VINCE McMAHON was through pulling football helmets and goldfish and barbecue sauce jars out of Jim Ross' rectum during the now-infamous spoof of Ross' real-life colon surgery, he left behind one item. I guess because it's not a tangible item that it was a bit hard for Doc Hiney to find, but it's something that J.R. has more of you-know-where than Vince has in his whole body: credibility.

WWE needs Jim Ross, if for no other reason than to be a counterweight to nonsense like that surgery skit.

Throughout his tenure with a company that seems as confused about what it wants its identity to be as the term "sports entertainment" implies, Ross always worked hard to maintain the dignity of the broadcast. While Jerry Lawler giggled like a schoolboy when a woman bent through the ropes in a low-cut top, Ross always tried to direct the audience's attention back to the fact that there was about to be an athletic contest taking place within those ropes.

Ross, of course, understands and accepts that pro wrestling today is not what it was when he broke into the business. It's more than a mere sporting event. It's a spectacle: a mix of sport, soap opera, comedy, pyro, music, and more. But if he were to list these components as if they were the ingredients on a food label, sport would surely come first.

Yet he was the man whose task it was to make sense for millions of people the insanity that was being played out before them. It was his responsibility to do play-by-play when Triple-H did his thing with the Katie Vick mannequin. To me, J.R.'s credibility made that and everything else that went on before us and behind the scenes more palatable. He was WWE's moral compass, its voice of reason, and if he was able to maintain his dignity through it all, there was still hope that one day that voice would be heard over all others and that sanity might be restored.

Of course, while the words of Jim Ross had a lot of influence with fans, the last word on everything that happened in the company belonged to Vince McMahon. And that includes the decision to relieve J.R. of his announcing duties on *Raw*.

Ross was fired ostensibly because, through Vince McMahon's eyes, he doesn't look the part. He wants a younger man who hasn't lost touch with WWE's desired demographic. I don't buy it for a second. Ross appealed to every demographic, and the reaction to his dismissal on wwe.com (which I do give WWE credit for posting) has been adamant in his support.

The firing of Ross might or might not be an elaborate hoax designed to coincide with Ross' colon surgery, which, thankfully, did not reveal cancer. The cowboy might be back at the mike before this issue ever sees print. I do hope so. I really like Joey Styles; he started in this business as a non-paid intern at *PWI* while we were headquartered in New York and he's damned good. But even J.S. admits he's no J.R. And with all due respect to Gordon Solie, the man long acknowledged as the greatest wrestling announcer of all-time, that honor now belongs to Ross.

I don't know what Ross' future holds. Like I said, he might be back as WWE's lead announcer, or maybe he'll achieve a lifelong goal of announcing University of Oklahoma football games. I can tell you this: If Ross' contract were to expire at the end of this year, and not the end of October 2006, there would be no way McMahon would have made such a move.

Wouldn't an announcing duo of Mike Tenay and Jim Ross be something to behold?

**Stu Saks**
**Publisher**


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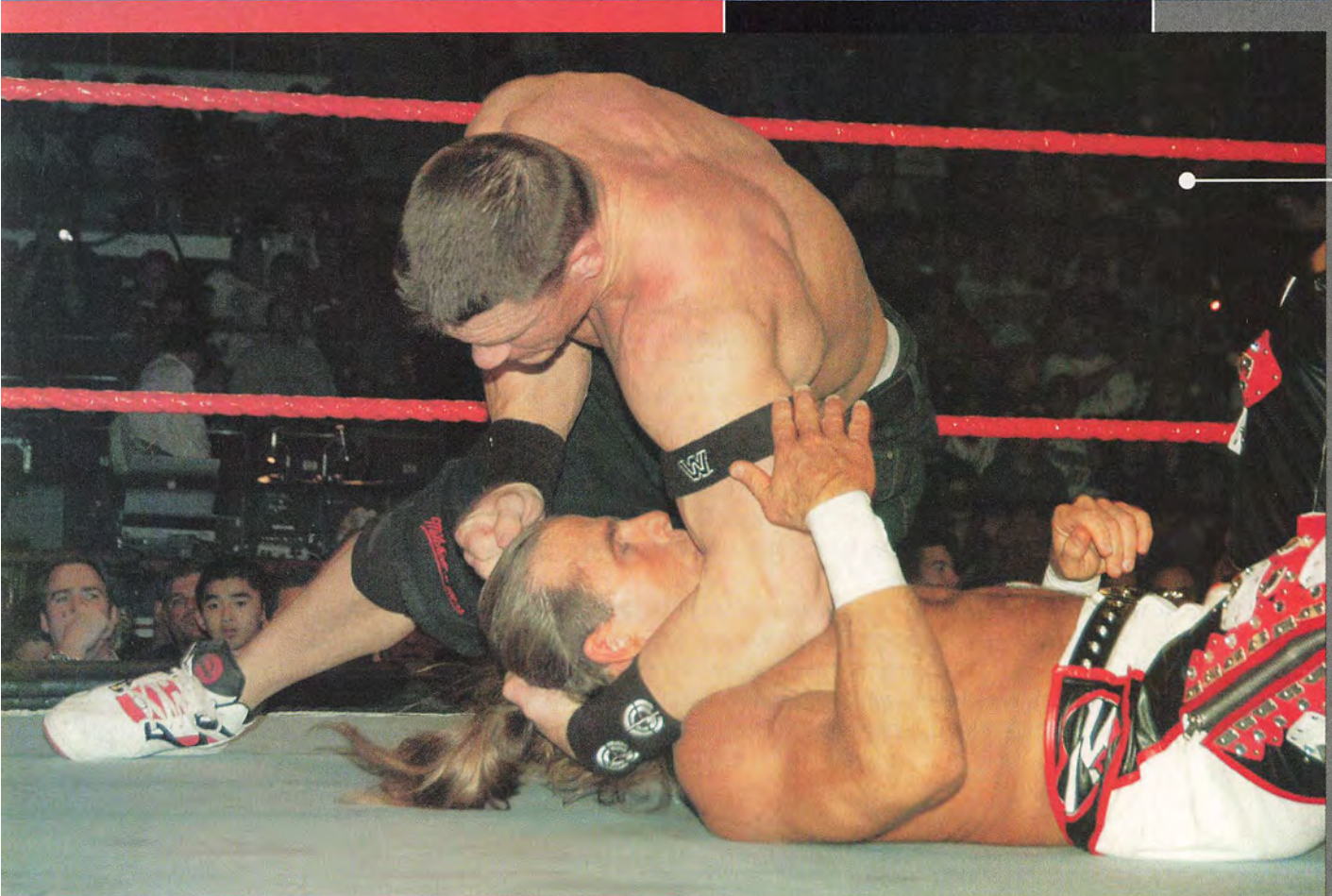

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February 2006

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Steve Austin/Triple-H by Vern Verna

**COVER DESIGN:**
Greg Stevens

**LOOK FOR THE SPECIAL YEAR-END (MARCH 2006) DOUBLE-ISSUE OF *PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED* ON SALE JANUARY 24, 2006**

# before the bell

Compiled by Will Welsh

## Write This!

When Mick Foley told us in "12 Questions" two issues ago, "These days, with the number of wrestling books out there, if you become a pro wrestler, you pretty much become an author. I think it has become mandatory for every wrestler to write a book," we got to thinking. He's not stretching the truth too much. There *are* too many wrestling autobiographies out there. Independent wrestlers write them. Fairly obscure old-timers write them. We were even surprised to see WWE publish William Regal's life story—not that it wasn't a well-written, fascinating book. But there are still some books that haven't been published (or even started, actually) that we're dying to read. Here's our wish list, in no particular order…

•The Ultimate Warrior story. It would detail … *um* … we're not sure what would be in that book. Probably a lot of words, a lot of chapters, and a lot of pages. Probably a lot of big words, some of which you'd even find in a dictionary. But if Warrior wrote it, your guess would be as good as ours as to what he'd be saying in it. Anyone know how to translate Warrior-ese into English?

•The Jonathan Coachman story. The world is waiting to read all about how he had dreamed of being a wrestling play-by-play guy since he was knee high to Big John Studd, how he has thousands of hours of footage of Gordon Solie in his video collection, and how he still studies those tapes to get even better than he already is.

•The Kane story. Somehow we think there's more to the man than what his *Journey Into Darkness* told us.

•The Stacy Keibler story. Just 'cause we like the title she gave us when we asked her a few years back what her autobiography would be called if she ever were to write it. She came up with *Lucky Legs.* Lucky, indeed.

•The Hardcore Holly story. We could relive those classic Sparky Plugg days and get his thoughts on why that character didn't take off. Plus, think of the insight he could offer into what makes him such a happy, peaceful, well-adjusted guy. Or maybe the low sales figures could just give him a different reason to be miserable. Suggested title: *Jolly Holly.*

•The Mark Henry story. The man does have a pretty interesting rags-to-riches story to tell, but we'd plunk down our $24.95 just to read the chapter about how one of the world's top weightlifters—a 1996 Olympian, in fact—got Vince McMahon to sign him to a 10-year, no-cut contract. "The World's Strongest Man"? How about "The World's Smartest Man"?

•The Gene Snitsky story. Come on, admit it. You'd pick up a copy. Something creepy about the guy just draws you to him.

•The Brock Lesnar story. And not just because we'd want to read the chapters on Sable (although we wouldn't skip over those). Must be fascinating to live in your own little world in which you actually think, despite not having any football experience above the high school level, you have a shot at just walking into an NFL training camp and earning a roster spot.

•The Charly Manson story. From deranged murderer/crazed cult leader to top star of AAA in Mexico. We see this one being made into an *E! True Hollywood Story* as well.

## Talkin' Trash

Here's a list of the top 10 wrestling-related items you've been talking about lately, and our gut reaction to each.

**10. *Tough Enough 2* champion Jackie Gayda signs with TNA.** But what about hubby Charlie Haas? Where's his love?

**9. Rhino defeats Jeff Jarrett for the NWA championship at TNA's Bound For Glory.** An understandable loss for Jarrett; he fully expected scheduled opponent Kevin Nash to succumb after a finger poke, so he wasn't exactly ring ready.

**8. Vader returns to WWE TV.** Was that really Vader? Could it have been the man who ate Vader?

**7. Jerry Jarrett and free agent wrestler Oleg Aleksandrovich Prudius meet with Vince McMahon about possible work.** Yes, this is the same Jerry Jarrett who fathered Jeff Jarrett and helped start TNA. We think he's been taking lessons from former ECW mole Tod Gordon.

**6. Stephanie McMahon returns to *Raw* as a regularly recurring figure.** Okay, there's nothing about Stephanie's figure that's regular, but that's a good thing.

**5. Jeff Jarrett regains the NWA championship from Rhino.** Shocker!

**4. Jim Ross undergoes colon surgery to remove a non-cancerous tumor from his large intestine.** Get well and please come back, J.R.

**3. Christian departs WWE.** If TNA signs him, he will—not can, but *will*—carry that promotion.

**2. Joey Styles becomes *Raw's* play-by-play announcer, at least temporarily.** The amount of irritation that Vince McMahon can take from Styles and Styles can take from McMahon will define the length of this relationship.

**1. Steve Austin walks out on WWE prior to his scheduled Taboo Tuesday match against Jonathan Coachman.** "Stone-Cold" may not wield the power that he used to, but that doesn't mean he'll just be someone's punk, either.

## The Internet Insider

The following wrestling-related items were culled from various wrestling-related Web sites—or were they? See if you can pick out the items that were actually reported on the Internet (which doesn't necessary mean that they're true) and the ones we blatantly made up. The answers appear at the end of this column on page 11.

1. In Japan's Hustle promotion, Motoya Izumi, a former star of Nou, a kabuki-like entertainment form that is very popular in Japan, will face Kenzo Suzuki at a "TripleMania" card. Izumi started in kabuki at the age of three due to the influence of his mother, Setsuki, and ended up as its biggest star until being fired in 2002. He sued regarding the firing, but lost. Meanwhile, Hiroko Suzuki has challenged the mother, who is also pretty famous in Japan but is 63 years old, to a bra and panties match.

2. Ever since WWE wrestler Matt Striker was fired from his job as a New York City school teacher, he's been fielding interview requests from numerous media outlets wanting to know if skipping school to wrestle, getting fired for it, and then landing a job with WWE made everything worth it. Striker has privately told friends that he wouldn't change a thing, but he's been singing a different tune in the interviews, apparently worried that his example will make kids believe that it's okay to skip school.

3. Spike TV wants more recognizable names to appear on TNA programming, especially wrestlers from the late WCW era who didn't jump to WWE when WCW was bought out. Those in management who are aware of the direction TNA needs to take in order to be a true alternative—with solid wrestling and fresh, compelling characters—are rolling their eyes at Spike's latest "trigger happy" attempt to push TNA into more of a sports entertainment niche because it only knows wrestling through a WWE mindset.

4. Many WWE wrestlers are concerned about the promotion's upcoming Far East tours. With the media harping on the dangers of the bird flu, a handful of wrestlers are openly saying that the job isn't worth it, and that if WWE tries to force them to go overseas, they'll refuse the trip. Others in the WWE locker room appreciate their co-workers' concern but are saying that they'll go because they're afraid that if they band together and refuse to go on the tours, Vince McMahon will view the movement as something akin to unionizing and fire everyone involved.

## Bizarro 12 Questions With ... Stacy Keibler

**We value our health, which is why that there are certain questions that we'd never ask certain professional wrestlers during an interview. These are those questions.**

**12. How long does it take you to wax those suckers?**

**11. Oh, you shave them?**

**10. Okay, how long does it take you to shave those suckers?**

**9. Why isn't it any of our business?**

**8. Maybe we could discuss it over dinner?**

**7. Lunch?**

**6. Breakfast?**

**5. *Ow!* Did we take that last one a bit far?**

**4. Can you forgive us?**

**3. You do know that we have pictures of you everywhere, right?**

**2. Why does that freak you out?**

**And the number-one question that we'd never ask Stacy Keibler:**

**1. Well, if that's the case, you wouldn't happen to have Christy Hemme's number on you, would you?**

## We Heard That!

"Is there a rivalry? I don't know. The thing is, WWE is huge. They've been around 30-plus years. I don't even know how many years they've been around ... Is there any animosity toward us? Absolutely not. We're two totally different things ... They have a great business and have made a lot of money for a lot of years. I don't know how we compete with them, because we are different businesses. We're so different. Obviously we compete for air time on pay-per-view—we're both jumping around talking to networks. But other than that, we're two totally different businesses."

—UFC President Dana White, discussing the rivalry (or lack thereof) with WWE, in an interview with *Pro Karate Weekly*

"I think Taboo Tuesday is a great concept. They did it last year, and I'm glad they stuck with it again this year. Once again I think it's using the Internet as a tool. If you look at the people on the Internet, don't get me wrong, I like the Internet fans because they are very passionate, but they are also very hypocritical. As soon as they say they want something and whenever they get it, they say, 'Well, we really didn't want that because of so-and-so.' A lot of the people in the Internet wrestling community, the diehard wrestling fans, will be the first to do that. It's hard to make them happy, but by giving them access to voting and letting them feel like they actually feel like they are a part of that."

—Matt Hardy, seemingly changing his tune on Internet fans, in an interview with *The Miami Herald*

"If WCW would have had me, they wouldn't have been the ones bankrupt. They would have been the ones that bought out WWE."

—John Bradshaw Layfield, during a rare moment of arrogance, in an interview with WWE's *Byte This!*

"I was never ever interested in working with [Shawn Michaels], to be honest with you."

—The Rock, putting the early kibosh on any possible match with HBK, in an interview with wwe.com

**"Sometimes, the more heinous things you do, the more people like it. It's a reflection of society. We're living in the era of the anti-hero. If you asked all the wrestlers, the vast majority of them would say they'd prefer to be booed. We get to go out there**

and have fun by upsetting people ... it's so much more fun than being one of the good guys. You can pretty much do what you want."

—Kane, sounding more eloquent than usual, in an interview with the *Edmonton Sun*

"I didn't want to be [at ECW One Night Stand] anyways. The whole idea of an ECW pay-per-view owned by WWE kind of revolted me. I wasn't into it to begin with. Whatever, I could care less at that point. It was really a sad day for me. It was nice to see the guys, the ECW guys that I hadn't seen in a long time, and it made me miss it that much more. Honestly, my last six months in the company, they weren't doing anything with me anyway, so I was pretty miserable, but then the thought of doing an ECW show owned by Vince made me sick to my stomach."

—Matt Hyson, the former Spike Dudley, coming off just slightly bitter toward WWE, in an interview with pwinsider.com

## caption me!

Think you're a better writer than the editors at *PWI*? Here's your chance to prove it, punk! This decade-old photo of Justin "Hawk" Bradshaw (long before the man was known as JBL) and manager Uncle Zebekiah (Dutch Mantel) demands a short, concise, and downright uproarious caption. If you think you're up to the task, e-mail your zany quips to prowrestlingillustrated@yahoo.com, or slap a stamp on an envelope and snail-mail it to "Caption Me!" Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Three issues from now, we'll share with you the best of the bunch—and the funnier the better.

## November's Best

Both Pauls agree. The Assassin only ate one Twinkie—really, only one. *Really.*

—Stacy Bentz, stacybentz@shaw.ca

"Have you been injured in an accident? The law offices of Pretty Wonderful and Masked will fight for you."

—John L. Patoka, bigangrybastard@hotmail.com

"Hold it, guys! I have an idea ... you can wipe those boogers on Nick Patrick's shirt!"

—Jeff Fide, jfide650@yahoo.com

"Would you buy a used tag team from this man?"

—Frank G. Lloyd Jr., Richwood, WV

Orndorff and Roma put the two asses in Assassin.

—Denise Carter, Stony Plain, Alberta

**Answers to Internet Insider:**

Items 2 and 4 are totally made up.

# ringside

**With Will Welsh**

**CHRISTIAN** HAS BADE farewell to WWE. According to reports, the two-time former Intercontinental and nine-time former WWE tag team champion was offered a contract extension only days before his previous deal was set to expire. Less than thrilled with the way his career has been handled in recent months and perhaps sensing opportunity with TNA, Christian decided against re-signing with the company that had been his home for the past eight years.

"My contract came up on October 31 and we negotiated back and forth a little bit," Christian said in an interview with wwe.com. "But it wasn't about the money for me, really. There were some other things that were going on that helped sway my decision. It wasn't a contract dispute, if that's what you want to call it. It was a number of different things—I've been on the road with WWE for eight years straight, and it takes a toll on your body when you're going 250 to 300 days a year.

"So part of it was that, and obviously there was some frustration and a lot of other reasons that factored in. But I wasn't bitter at all. There's no hostility. There's just some times when you need a change and you need to do different things. It was something that I felt was necessary for myself at this time."

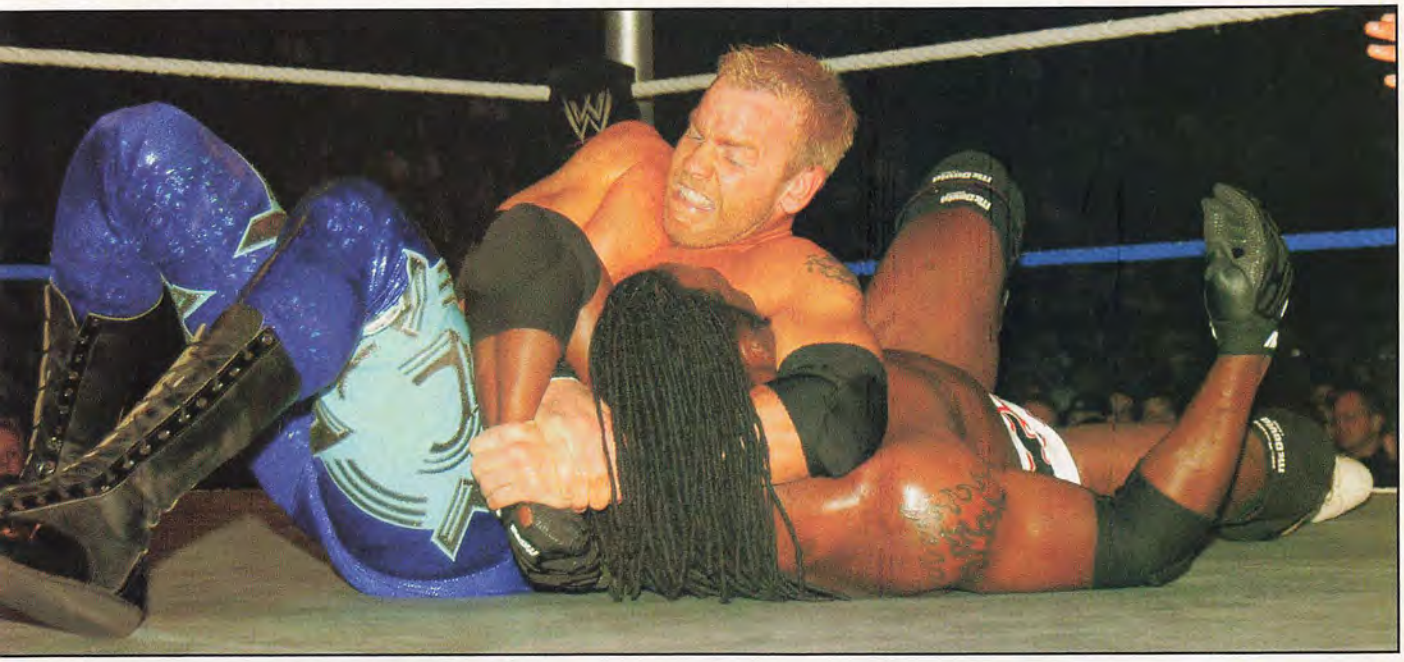
Christian's decision to leave WWE came as a surprise to some insiders, but it's really not all that hard to figure out. He has spent most of his eight years with WWE in the mid-card, where he has made decent money but has sacrificed for each dime he's received. He's had a few brushes with main-eventing, but when his most recent shot at breaking into the top tier fizzled out almost immediately after he was drafted to Smackdown, insiders say that his backstage demeanor changed dramatically. While he still showed up on time and performed his duties admirably, it was said that the lack of a main event push squelched his desire to go out and perform at the top of his game.

After many frustrating years stuck in the mid-card, Christian had simply lost the drive to push himself within the WWE infrastructure.

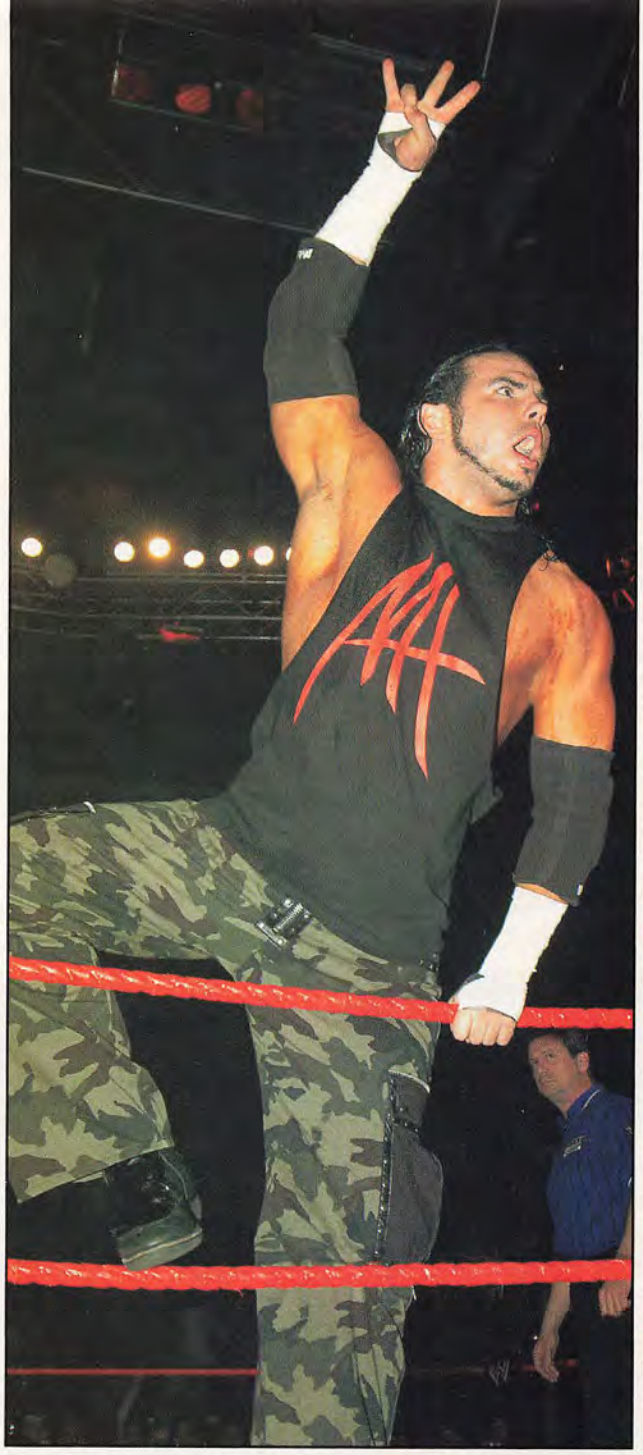
Again, this is understandable. Not only has Christian watched his main event push get derailed, he's also watched as similarly minded friends who were expecting main event pushes, such as **Matt Hardy**, slip back down into the mid-card with nary a thought.

Add into that the fact that WWE now has a pretty viable competitor in the form of TNA, and it all makes sense.

Is Christian going to take the leap to TNA that Hardy didn't (and probably should have)? His good friend **Rhino**, who left WWE with-



**Eight years in WWE was enough for Christian ... for now anyway. He hasn't commented as to whether he plans to wrestle in TNA or elsewhere now that he is a free agent. If he does join TNA, it could turn out to be a huge move.**



**Just a few months ago, Matt Hardy had to decide whether he preferred the security of WWE or the opportunity in TNA. He chose WWE. Christian undoubtedly saw how that played out.**

out the star power that Christian currently has, has prospered in the little promotion that could; he's even had a short reign with the NWA championship.

Christian could accomplish even more.

Also, should Christian jump to TNA, he would unofficially open up the marketplace. **Chris Jericho** may be on the record as saying that he only wants to wrestle for WWE if and when he returns, but he's currently a free agent who might be watching what goes on with Christian. He could change his mind. Other wrestlers are having their contracts come up for renewal as well. And then there's **Paul Heyman**, whose contract with WWE expires at the end of 2005.

Will Christian be first WWE wrestler who will go to TNA of his own volition? A whole lot of people are hoping so.

At Taboo Tuesday, a strange thing happened: **Joey Styles**, the former ECW play-by-play man, took over that role for the Raw brand. As of press time, Styles was still in the midst of what was being described as a "tryout," but considering how intent WWE seems on getting **Jim Ross** out of the broadcast chair for good and that the promotion's negotiations with UFC announcer **Mike Goldberg** fell apart at the last minute, it's likely that Styles' tryout will turn into a full-time position.

Why Styles? For one, he's probably the only person WWE could bring in to fill Ross' chair who wouldn't immediately receive an overwhelming backlash. The wrestling community and wrestling fans in general respect Styles, and when you're replacing someone like Jim Ross after he's been removed from the broadcast position in a maneuver that was roundly criticized, you need someone who's nearly bulletproof.

Styles is also pretty darn good at what he does. He knows the moves. He knows the wrestlers. He knows the history. He's experienced. Okay, he's occasionally (or more than occasionally) over the top, but name me a wrestling announcer who isn't and I'll bet you that you're giving me the name of someone who doesn't effectively call matches. With the proper guidance (and **Vince McMahon** will surely be eager to give him that guidance), there's no reason why he can't be the person who calls *Raw* for the next decade-plus.

Of course, there are a number of things that could keep this from happening. Styles will demand adequate compensation if he's going to take on the position full-time. He already has a nice career in the advertising industry, so it's not as if he needs the position or the money. There's also the question of whether Styles can co-exist with Vince McMahon. Both are highly outspoken. However, because it's McMahon's company, Styles is the one who will have to check his ego. Whether he's able to do so will decide if they can move forward together.

Right now, if J.R. isn't going to

**The voice of ECW could be the full-time voice of WWE (*Raw* anyway) by the time you read this. Joey Styles added a lot to the first few broadcasts he did for WWE. But there are potential pitfalls.**

# PWI TURNS 25!

*Pro Wrestling Illustrated* recently celebrated its 25th year as the sport's number-one publication in a very special way. Those who subscribe to *PWI* or spotted it at the newsstand in time got a treat. Not only did *PWI* produce a silver anniversary special, but as an added bonus, we polybagged a re-print of our very first issue, from 1979!

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be sitting in that seat, Styles is the right man for the job. Here's hoping that he and WWE can get along well enough to make the relationship work.

**Jerry Jarrett**, one of the founders of TNA and father of NWA champion **Jeff Jarrett**, walked into WWE headquarters this past fall with a Russian amateur wrestler looking to break into the business and had a meeting with some WWE higher-ups. This remarkable meeting was captured for posterity by wwe.com, and a picture was posted for the world to see.

The fact that this happened just one week before TNA's most important broadcast ever—its two-hour prime time Spike TV special—is almost unbelievable, but it's clearly the result of Jarrett's fall from grace within TNA (he has lost most of his power since Panda Energy took over the company). How this affects his future relationship with TNA—and WWE for that matter—remains to be seen, but for TNA to view him as anything other than a possible mole at this point is unrealistic. It wouldn't shock me if he winds up relieved of his duties altogether. Perhaps that's what he wants.

In more positive TNA news, kudos to the promotion for continuing to bring in some of the best and brightest from Ring of Honor. Former ROH champ **Austin Aries** looked sensational in a six-man X division match on TNA's first prime time special on Spike and looks like he'll be a major player soon, Also, **Roderick Strong** has shown he can hang with **A.J. Styles** and others. In November, TNA announced reigning ROH pure champion **Nigel McGuinness** would get to show his stuff on the countdown show before the Genesis pay-per-view. I wouldn't be surprised to see the London native become a regular for TNA.

That does it for me this month, fans. Enjoy your wanderings. ☐

**The relationship long-time promoter Jerry Jarrett has with son Jeff probably changed a bit after he took a surprise meeting at WWE headquarters this fall.**

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# in focus

By Dave Lenker

## GOODBYE FOR GOOD THIS TIME?

It was the most confusing segment in *Raw* history. And considering how many *Raw* segments I've seen in the last 13 years, that's saying a lot.

It was the night before Taboo Tuesday, and although I had heard rumblings earlier in the day about Steve Austin having his latest creative differences with WWE, I was left scratching my head as to how a segment that started out as an attempt to hype a match between Austin and Jonathan Coachman with Jim Ross' job at stake turned into, within about 10 minutes, a segment in which Batista got beaten up by Big Van Vader (major emphasis on *Big*) and Goldust.

And in case you missed it, Funaki and Vince McMahon were also involved, although I don't care to try to remember how.

If that confusion wasn't enough to make your brain hurt, remember that that Steve Austin-Coach match for Jim Ross' job became a Batista-Coach match for ... not a damn thing, actually.

Heck, I didn't care. Just as I had been hoping a year ago that we'd get to see a Shawn Michaels-Kurt Angle match no matter what the buildup, I had long—okay, for a few months—been anticipating the night on which the World champion (of Smackdown, mind you) would get to do battle with the fill-in *Raw* play-by-play man. The buildup was nonexistent, but as long as I was getting Batista-Coach in some form (I'll admit I was hoping ever so hopelessly that fans would vote for a verbal debate over a street-fight at Taboo Tuesday), I wasn't going to complain. Thanks to Austin's latest walkout, I got to cross another dream match off my list. Now, regarding the chances of us seeing Michael Cole vs. John Cena ...

All silliness aside, here we are again. Steve Austin didn't get what he wanted and so he walked. He was the reason for all that confusion.

There are two ways to react to this same-old, same-old kind of news. One is to give credit to Austin for standing up for what he believes in. Logic means a lot to Austin. That's one reason he walked out of WWE three years ago. Creative wanted to put him in the ring against then-rising star Brock Lesnar on *Raw* with zero buildup. He knew that rushing what could have been a WrestleMania main event made no sense.

Loyalty also means a lot to Austin. One of the people to whom he is loyal is Jim Ross. He apparently found out a few days before Taboo Tuesday that there were no plans for J.R. to be brought back to *Raw*. He took that personally and wondered what the point of his match with Coach was. And he walked.

Good for him, right? Actually, maybe even better for WWE.

I do respect Austin for sticking to what he believes in. But I have to come down on WWE's side this time. This walking out at critical times stuff has to stop. The only way to make sure it stops is to stop relying on "Stone-Cold"

**Steve Austin is still adored by WWE fans the world over. This is in spite of the fact that he has walked out on them several times, most recently before Taboo Tuesday. Dave Lenker thinks Vince McMahon should sever all official ties to "Stone-Cold."**

altogether. That shouldn't be all that hard considering his appearances have been more and more infrequent of late. Plus, with one less legend upon whom WWE can occasionally call, the chances of more time and energy being devoted to the stars of today and tomorrow increase.

I have to think the chances of Austin wrestling Hulk Hogan at WrestleMania 22 are remote now. I wouldn't want to be the one approaching "Stone-Cold" with proposals for such a match if I had any inkling that he wouldn't like them. Could be another Austin walkout waiting to happen.

Funny, but it was just weeks before this latest Austin walkout that I watched *The Self-Destruction Of The Ultimate Warrior* on DVD. One of the focal points of WWE's burial of Warrior was how difficult he was to deal with at times. Let me make it clear that Austin is no Warrior. He doesn't act strangely backstage, has never cut a nonsensical promo, he *is* well-liked by his peers for the most part, he was a terrific wrestler, and he most certainly earned every bit of fame and fortune that came his way. But he can be difficult.

As bizarre and difficult as Warrior was, Vince McMahon gave him chance after chance. He said he owed it to his audience. Finally, though, he concluded that enough was enough. Warrior hasn't been seen in WWE since. I think enough has become enough with Austin, too. Vince owes it to his audience. Batista vs. Coach was all the confusing proof I needed.

## AND ON THE SUBJECT OF CONFUSING ...

Seems I've had this feeling a lot lately. Lots of strange, ironic, and confusing stuff going on in wrestling lately. For instance:

•I understand that Edge was a fool for saying he didn't care about the Raw brand and was concerned only about himself and Lita leading up to what was supposed to be his involvement in an interbrand tag team match at Taboo Tuesday. Just not a smart thing to say. But was it really harsh enough to turn the entire Raw locker room against him a week later? Suddenly, even Snitsky, who had befriended Edge only months earlier because he enjoyed Lita's feet, joined in serenading the twosome as Raw GM Eric Bischoff sent Edge to *Smackdown* to face Batista in a streetfight.

•How ironic was it that Edge, who had a legitimate chest injury at the time, was sent to *Smackdown* to face Batista in what figured to be his last match for at least a little while ... and Batista ended up tearing a muscle in his back in their bout?

•When did these WWE wrestlers become so fiercely loyal to their brands anyway? Every year they're all subject to a random draft in which they can be sent to the other side on a whim. Most just carry on business as usual when they are drafted. They can also be traded, and if a wrestler is ever fired by one brand, he thinks nothing of signing with the other. It's not as if they're one big team with one common goal.

•How in the heck did Vince McMahon convince Mick Foley to return to WWE for his first match since Backlash 2004 and have him face Carlito in a bout that had what, two weeks of hype behind it? I hope it hasn't become all about the money for Foley.

•Am I the only one having more and more of a hard time taking these three separate faces of Foley seriously, especially when fans are given a choice as to which identity they want to see, and Foley has to morph into that character with little notice?

•Why did WWE go to such lengths to produce all those vignettes for Lance Cade and Trevor Murdoch (yes, hype for the arrival of a tag team in WWE!), only to have them get obliterated by The Big Show and Kane in matches for the Raw tag belts within a few months?

•Why am I surprised that it took until the year 2005 for Vince McMahon to introduce a character called The Boogeyman? Wouldn't he have made a perfect partner for Zeus, circa 1989? And how is it possible that I find Boogey entertaining in very small doses?

*(Have a comment or question about "In Focus" or anything else you see in* ***PWI?*** *You can contact Dave Lenker via e-mail at dave_lenker@yahoo.com.)* □

**Have you already forgotten that Mankind beat Carlito at Taboo Tuesday? Don't feel bad if you have. It had been a long time since we saw a meaningless Mick Foley match in WWE.**

# off the top rope

**By Brandi Mankiewicz**

If you wish to contribute to Brandi's mailbag, send your letters to:
**TOP ROPE Box 1148 Ft. Washington, PA 19034**
Or send e-mail to: **offthetoprope@yahoo.com**

*(Editor's note: The opinions expressed in this column are those of the letter writers and Brandi Mankiewicz herself. They do not necessarily reflect the editorial views of this magazine.)*

*WHAT IS WRONG with you wrestling fans? Why can't you send a letter without leaving sticky dirt marks all over the envelope and contents? It's disgusting. I often handle the mail for other divisions of my lovely company and I must say that* **Horoscope Guide** *fans don't leave any sticky messes on their correspondence. Neither do the good fans of* **The Ring**, *our main boxing title. Granted,* **The Ring** *gets more prisoner mail than the wrestling titles, but at least its mail is tidy and clean.*

*Have you no shame, fans? Is this how you'd like to be represented to someone? I'd almost understand if it was just the mail for this column, since I can envision you all dropping your letters into mud and other assorted drippings before dropping them off at the post office, but it's all* **PWI** *mail. I'm currently processing the Achievement Award ballots, and the majority of those are downright gross, too. How can you expect me to extract your choices if they're covered with cheese?*

*Well, I'm not covered with cheese, dirt, or anything of a sticky nature. I'm also smart enough to know that Ken Kennedy is not a candidate for Rookie of the Year. What I am is your squeaky clean champion.*

Dear Queen Brandi,

Hello. Maybe you can help me figure something out as far as the name game goes. Why is it that Team 3D can't use the name The Dudley Boyz anymore? That name was given to them in ECW, not WWE. Another question I have is why is it that Team 3D can't use the Dudley name, yet Raven can use that name? Raven wasn't Raven until he came to ECW, either (before he was Johnny Polo in the WWF and, I believe, Scotty Flamingo in WCW).

Thank you for reading my letter and acknowledging me.

SHAUN STIRNEMAN
ststriker@yahoo.com

**Dear Shaun,**

**Hello. I guess I must acknowledge you since I have some answers for you. The Dudleys made their mistake by not being the originator of the name or the characters. The name was given to them by ECW, so the Dudley name was technically property of ECW. When ECW went belly up and WWE swooped in to buy the remnants, WWE also purchased the characters. Raven is different. He created his character himself, so he owns it. He can take it with him wherever he wants.**

**To put this in perspective: When Richard Thomas wanted to leave the classic TV show *The Waltons*, the producers didn't just let him take the John Boy Walton name with him. No, they waited for two years and then hired Robert Wightman to play the John Boy character. Years later, Richard Thomas is still recognized as John Boy, even though he wasn't the only one to play the character.**

**Bottom line is this: If you're a wrestler, get every trademark and copyright possible for your gimmick. The**

**Shark Boy might not be as famous as the former Dudley Boyz, but he is a lot smarter. He could teach Brother Ray and Devon (or whatever they're calling themselves now) a lot about trademarks and such.**

**smart ones always do. A good example of this is Shark Boy. My finned favorite wrapped up his unique look, character, and name with all types of legal mumbo jumbo. Then, when Disney decided to do *Shark Boy And Lava Girl*, it was served with papers for gimmick infringement. The lawsuit is still pending, but Sharkie does have a good chance at beating the big company.**

Just because Samoa Joe signed with TNA, it doesn't mean TNA is a more stable company than WWE. All you TNA fans out there need to get a little perspective.

Dear Brandi,

What's happening in the wrestling world these days? It seems that Vinnie Mac is losing his mind! Don't get me wrong, I know he's like the godfather of wrestling, but he is making so many roster cuts. This year he has given up so many big time stars. Key example: Team 3D (a.k.a. The Dudley Boyz). TNA is reaping all the benefits! Vince is just setting himself up for another wrestling war.

Many wrestlers, in my opinion, feel that TNA has more stability in its company than WWE, where all of the wrestlers are thinking, *Who's next?* Samoa Joe is a prime example of that. He signed with TNA instead of WWE. I can't believe that WWE released Frankie Kazarian because he refused to cut his hair! I've seen both Samoa Joe and Frankie Kazarian perform, and they both have a lot of potential, but I guess that's just two more for TNA.

CHRIS ALLEN
Jackson, KY

**Chris,**

**So you must be one of the newer wrestling experts. I've never heard your name mentioned in any wrestling circles. For an expert, your opinion is pretty wrong. TNA is still in its infancy and does not have the stability of a major, publicly traded entertainment company. Samoa Joe isn't a good example, as he was never offered a WWE contract. As for Frankie Kazarian, that pretty boy is an idiot. He pitched a fit about his hair and lost the best contract he'll ever be offered because of it. Considering that he turned his back on TNA to go to WWE, he'll be lucky if TNA lets him come back. If I was TNA, I'd tell him to take his hair and find work elsewhere.**

**Sure, Vince's roster cuts were shocking, but most of the people who were released served no purpose on the roster. They were just taking up space. Besides, who's to say Vince didn't release certain people knowing that he'd ignite a war with TNA? Vince will be the first to admit that he's at his best when he's being challenged.**

***Letter of the month (taken verbatim from the actual letter to share my torture with you all):***

I Nicky Ziegenfuss
WOULD Like FOR
YOU GUYS UP TheRe
To SenD me
A TNA WRESTLiNG CATALOG
TO ORDeR DVD's FROm
BeCAUSe They Do Not
SeLL Them here were
I AM AT AND LeT
me KNOW OK!

NICKY Zigenfuss
COALDALE, PA

**Dear Nicky,**

**I hate to tell you this, but you are incorrect in writing that TNA DVDs are not sold in your area. Try schlepping your hiney to one of the three Wal-Marts in your area. TNA DVDs are sold at each of these locations. Theses stores are not that far from your town, and I'm sure someone in your family must shop at one of these fine establishments. Doesn't everyone in the coal region shop there?**

**Also, as a side note, I didn't realize the Panther Valley School District was still churning out substandard students even after Gene Snitsky graduated. I don't care what grade level you've currently attained. You really need to learn how to properly write *words* as well as correspondence. Wait, that might be a little over your head. Allow me to translate English to Coal Cracker Speak:**

I'm tellin' yaz da troot dat yous really need to be learnin' writin' in skool, yo. yaz ain't gonna go nowhere if ya don't. Get outta coaldale and head south of the mountain to da wal-mart in St. clair and pick up yer movies, along with your gotchies, pierogies, and fixings for flitch, yo. □

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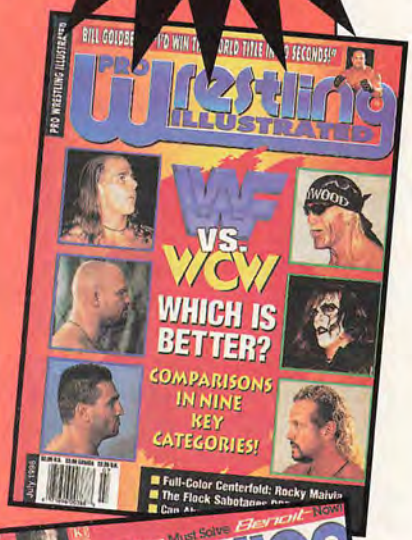

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**September 1999: Why Stone-Cold Might Get Out While He's Still On Top!** Centerfold: Sting. Plus: Kidman & Misterio, The Rock, Bret Hart, Taz-Sabu.

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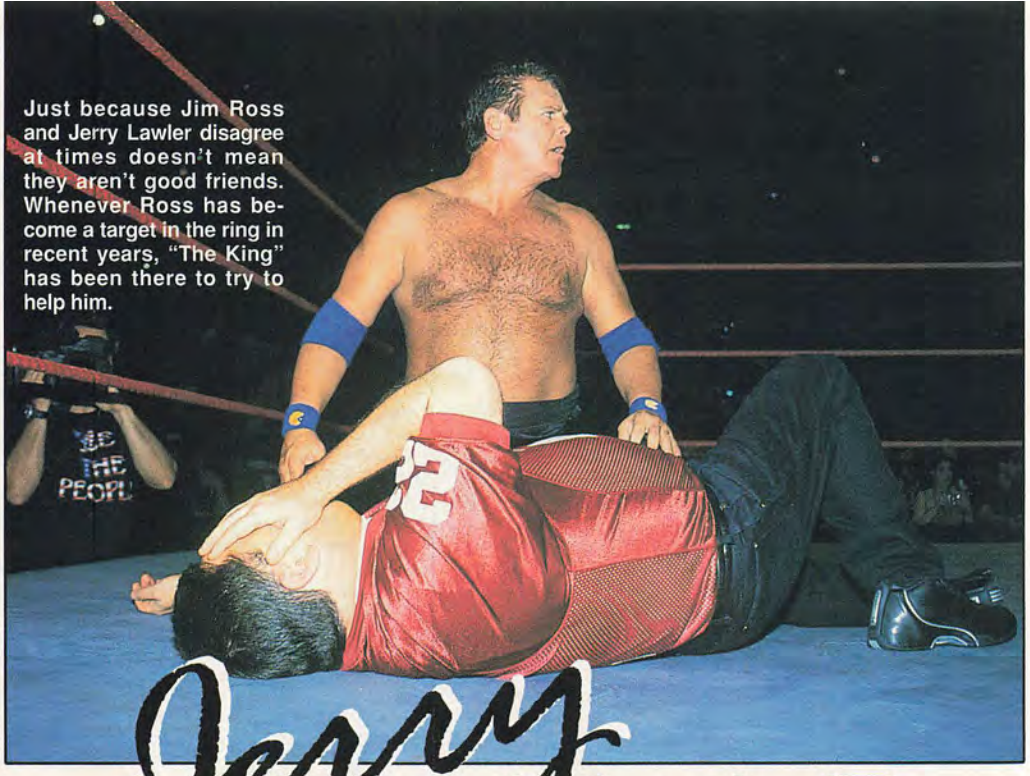


Just because Jim Ross and Jerry Lawler disagree at times doesn't mean they aren't good friends. Whenever Ross has become a target in the ring in recent years, "The King" has been there to try to help him.

# Jerry LAWLER

*FOR MOST OF the past 12 years, Jerry Lawler has been a **Monday Night Raw** fixture, handling the color commentary alongside Jim Ross, a man many analysts consider to be the greatest play-by-play commentator in wrestling.*

*The Lawler/Ross announce pairing has established itself as WWE's "A" team and become the measuring stick for all other wrestling commentators today. Throughout the years, Ross and Lawler have clashed at times—both publicly and privately—but even though they may have different opinions and personal styles, they have developed a deep-seated mutual respect. Several times over the past few years, they have teamed as partners in the ring (against Al Snow and Jonathan Coachman at Unforgiven 2003, for instance), and stood up for each other (Ross assisting Lawler in his 2000 feud with Tazz, Lawler beating then-Raw GM Chief Morley to win Ross' job back for him in 2003).*

*Ross and Lawler have forged a deeper bond than most tag teams, traveling from city to city, calling many of the biggest matches of recent history, and from time to time, whether they wanted to do so or not, getting physically involved in the action. When Vince McMahon publicly fired Ross in October, it was a harsh blow to Lawler as well. His friend and partner was being made a scapegoat, and this time, there was nothing "The King" could do to help. What made it worse was that the McMahons didn't just fire Ross—they went out of their way to humiliate him as well. First there was the low blow from Linda, delivered just seconds after she relieved him of his duties, and then there was the ridiculous colon surgery comedy sketch featuring Vince as surgeon and Nurse Slobberknockers on **Raw** just a week later.*

*In this exclusive interview with PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED Senior Writers Dan Murphy and Harry Burkett and Contributing Writer Jason Langin, Lawler talks about the importance of quality announcers, his thoughts on Ross' removal from the booth (and his chances of returning), and why he personally made a public apology to McMahon while Ross refused and subsequently lost his job.*

**Every issue, reporters from PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED will participate in an incisive press conference with a top wrestling star. The questions will be demanding. And the answers will reveal the innermost thoughts of the giants of the sport.**

**DAN MURPHY: Jerry, thanks for making the time to talk to us today. Prior to the October 10 *Raw*, when Vince McMahon actually fired Jim Ross, there had been a lot of speculation that Ross might be on his way out of the announce booth. In fact, on his "Ross Report" on the WWE Web site, Ross acknowledged the rumors and said, "Where there's smoke, there's usually fire," indicating the rumors could be true. When did you find out he was being removed from the announce table?**

**JERRY LAWLER:** It probably sounds unbelievable to you guys, but I didn't know for sure until Vince McMahon actually came out and fired him. I had heard a lot of rumors, sure, but we hear rumors all the time in this business. You learn to take them for what they're worth, which is usually nothing. But you never know. In this case, there was something to it. I knew J.R. hadn't been feeling his best lately, so I thought something might happen, and it might just be a temporary thing. He didn't really want to talk much about it at the time. I really didn't know this was—for all intents and purposes—a permanent thing until well after the fact. I guess it's permanent anyway. It's hard to get a real answer around here sometimes.

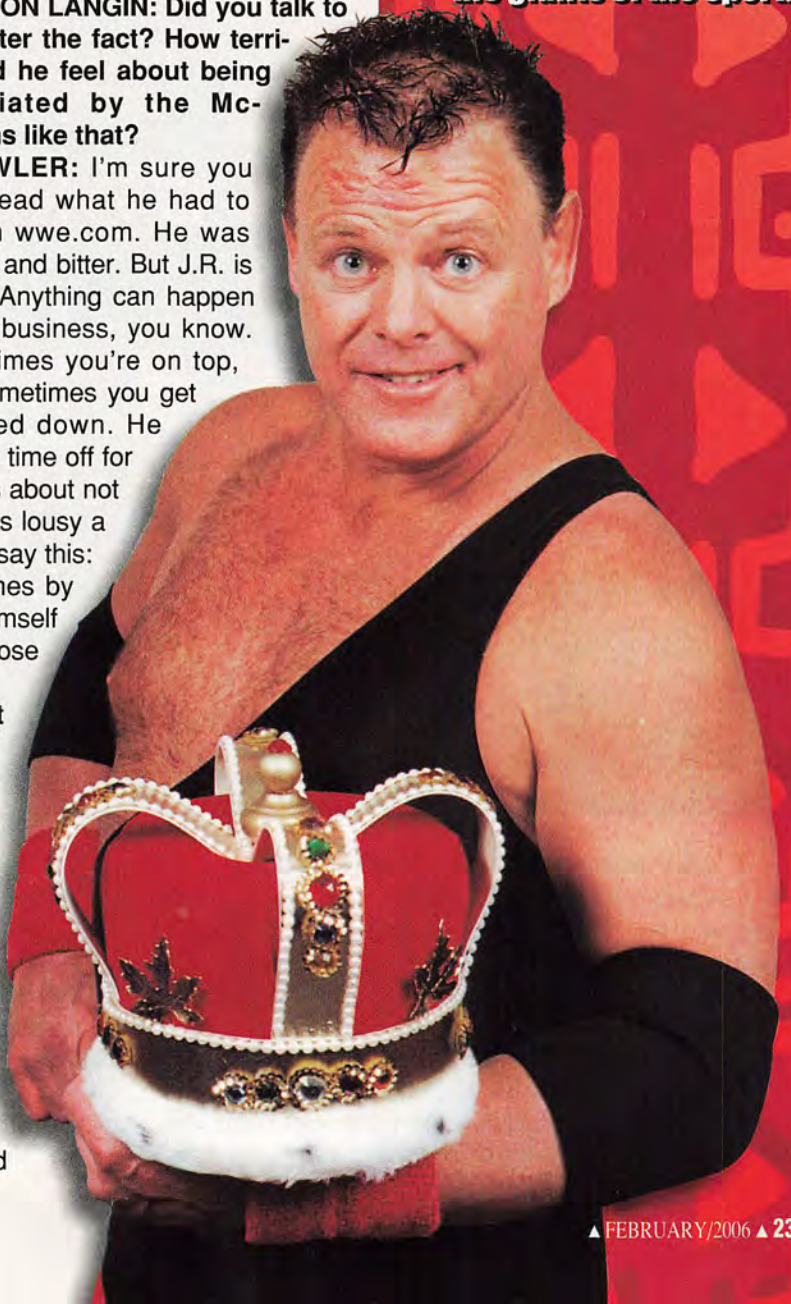
**"If I had known J.R. was going to make a stand like he did and pay for it the way he did, I probably would not have issued that apology. If somebody had to go, I think I would have volunteered to take the fall. J.R. is too good a man to be treated that way."**

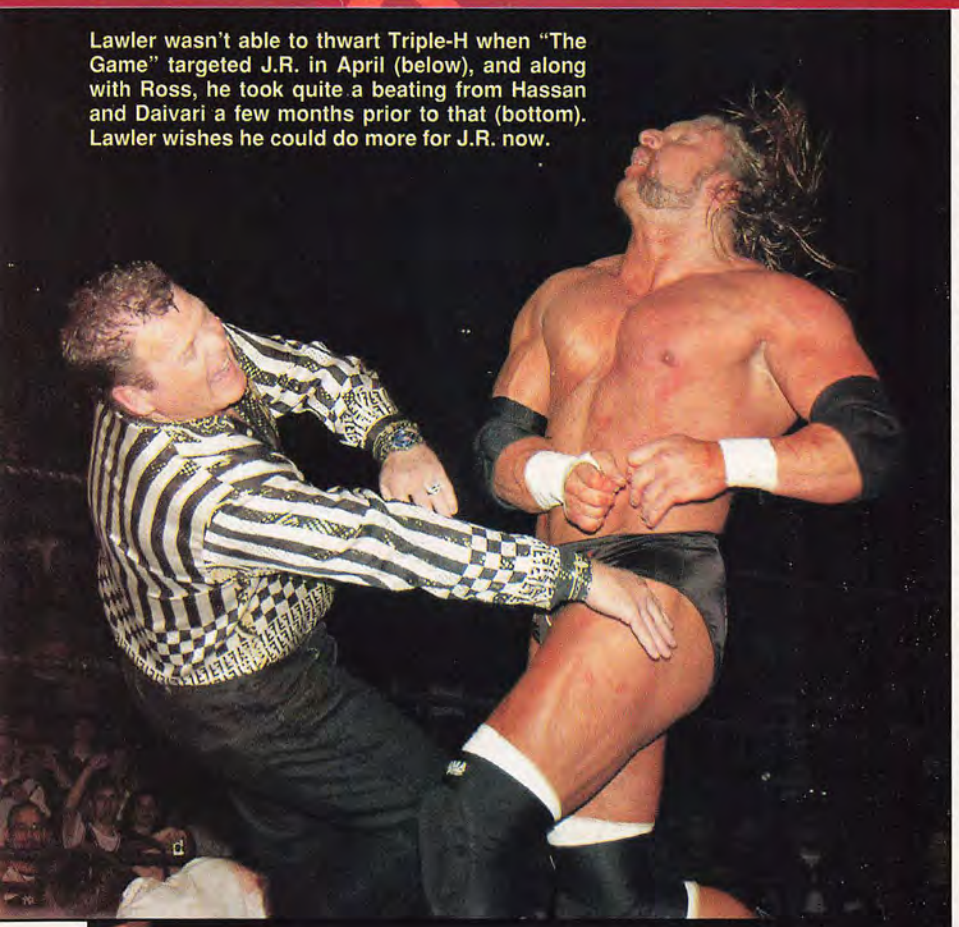
**JASON LANGIN: Did you talk to J.R. after the fact? How terrible did he feel about being humiliated by the McMahons like that?**

**LAWLER:** I'm sure you guys read what he had to say on wwe.com. He was furious and bitter. But J.R. is a pro. Anything can happen in this business, you know. Sometimes you're on top, and sometimes you get knocked down. He understands that. He knew he needed some time off for his surgery. But if Vince McMahon is serious about not bringing him back at all, then I think it was as lousy a way to send him off as you can find. I'll also say this: J.R.'s been knocked down before—two times by this very company, in fact—and he'll dust himself off and get back up again just like he did those other times. I have no doubt about that.

**HARRY BURKETT: When Vince brought you, Ross, and Coach into the ring and insisted you each apologize for not preventing Steve Austin from stunning everyone or at least doing something afterward, both you and Coach apologized pretty quickly, while Jim would only apologize for Linda McMahon being attacked. What was going through your head at that moment? Since when does "The King" apologize for his actions?**

**LAWLER:** It wasn't my finest moment, I admit, Harry. The fact of the matter is that you have to respect the McMahon family. They can—and *have*—ruined careers and





Lawler wasn't able to thwart Triple-H when "The Game" targeted J.R. in April (below), and along with Ross, he took quite a beating from Hassan and Daivari a few months prior to that (bottom). Lawler wishes he could do more for J.R. now.

ruined lives. I have bills to pay, just like you guys. If I have to swallow my pride from time to time, well, that goes with the job. If I had known J.R. was going to make a stand like he did and pay for it the way he did, I probably would not have issued that apology. If somebody had to go, I think I would have volunteered to take the fall. J.R. is too good a man to be treated that way.

**MURPHY: The fans have really been up in arms about this whole situation. Why do you think the fans are so passionate about Jim Ross?**

**LAWLER:** You know, we announcers play a vital role in wrestling. I never quite realized how vital announcers were until I got out of the ring and into the booth. Wrestlers and their feuds can kind of come and go sometimes, but you develop a level of comfort with the announcers. I don't know if everybody realizes it, but it's true. It's true for wrestling and all the other major sports, too. These are the people who are saying the things you might be saying in your living room. When Shawn Michaels hits an incredible move and you cheer, you can hear that same passion in J.R.'s voice. Even after all this time in the business, J.R. is still the biggest fan there is. In many ways, he's the voice of the fans. He has an encyclopedic knowledge of this sport, and he doesn't insult anyone's intelligence. People respect him for that. Bad announcers can kill a promotion.

**MURPHY: Is that a dig at WCW?**

**LAWLER:** Hey, if the show fits, wear it! Really, though, if you have TV, you need announcers who can engage the fans and make them excited about upcoming matches. Your announcers are your top salesmen. If you can't win them over, you don't have much of a product.

**BURKETT: Do you think Ross is gone for good, or is this another temporary hiatus?**

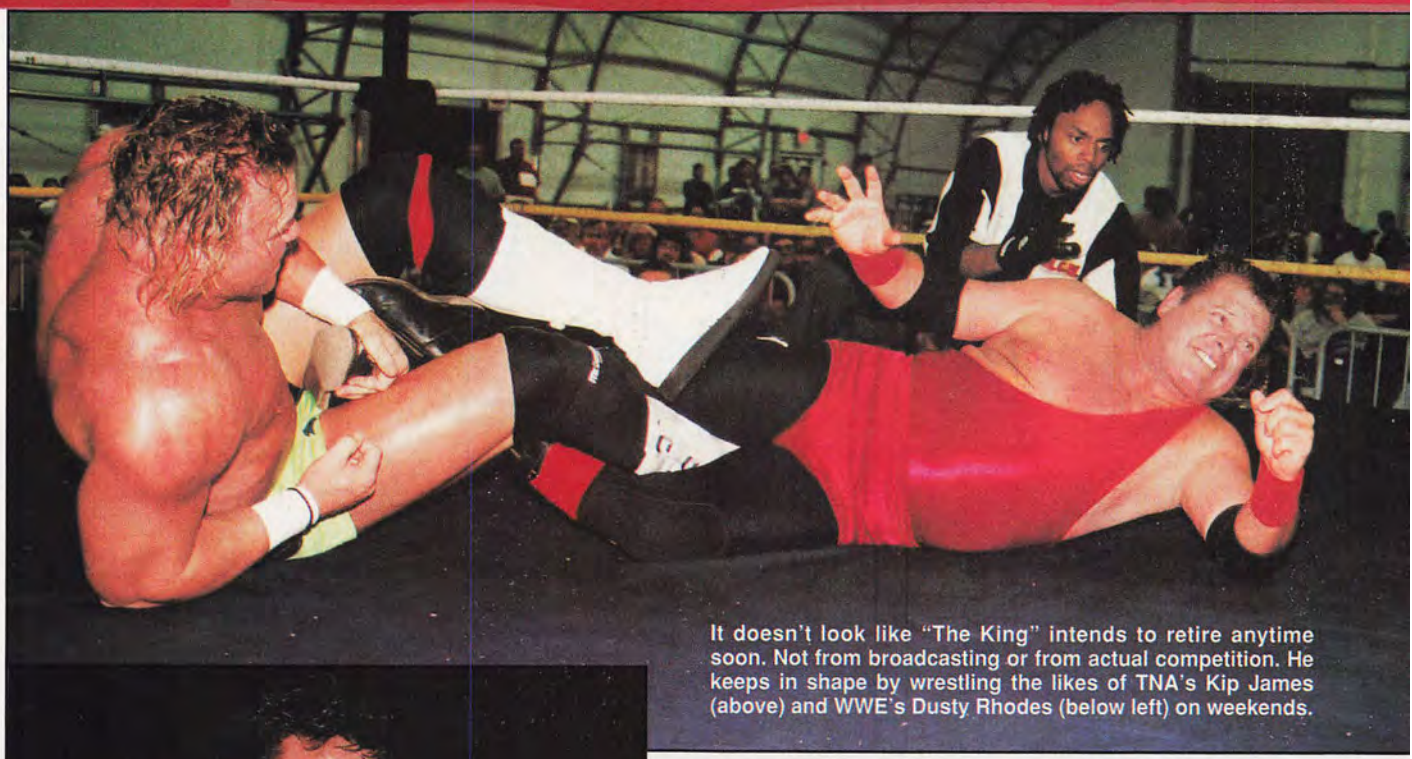
**LAWLER:** How many times would you guess I've been asked that question? I think the only people who really know that are the McMahons and the fans.

**BURKETT: How so?**

**LAWLER:** If the fans really want J.R. back, WWE will have no choice but to bring him back. There were a couple of times when I lost my spot as a color commentator. Fortunately, the fans wanted me back and were very vocal about it, and before too long, WWE brought me back. I know it's a stupid cliche and all, but you can never say never in this business. The fans usually get what they want.

**LANGIN: In talking to you today, I get the impression you still have a lot of passion for what you're seeing every Monday night.**

**LAWLER:** I think there are a lot of great things going on in WWE for the fans to be excited about. The Ric Flair-Triple-H feud could be one for the ages.



It doesn't look like "The King" intends to retire anytime soon. Not from broadcasting or from actual competition. He keeps in shape by wrestling the likes of TNA's Kip James (above) and WWE's Dusty Rhodes (below left) on weekends.

John Cena is getting better and better every week, and future legends like Kurt Angle and Shawn Michaels are out there putting on classic matches on a weekly basis.

**BURKETT: Do you watch a lot of *Smackdown,* or do your *Raw* duties and your part-time wrestling schedule tie up most of your time?**

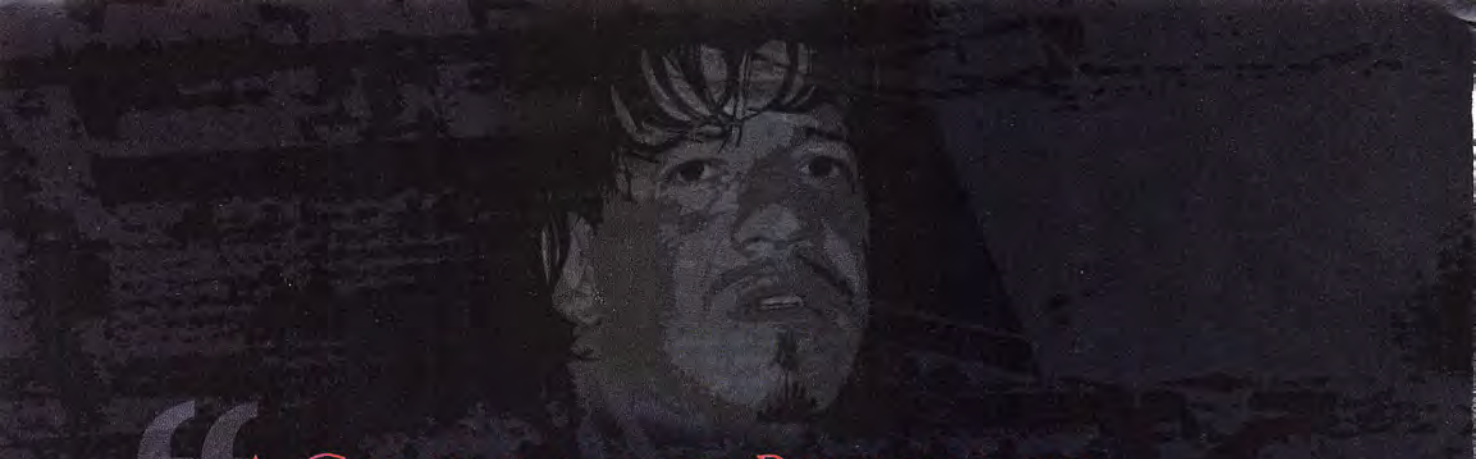
**LAWLER:** I watch as much as I can, but I might miss an episode of *Smackdown* here and there. I make sure I get updates from the boys all the time, too. It's important to know what's going on over there. You never know when a JBL or Rey Misterio or someone will invade *Raw.* You have to be prepared.

**MURPHY: Joey Styles took over for Ross at Taboo Tuesday and reportedly is penciled in as the next full-time *Raw* announcer. Do you think Styles is a good fit for *Raw?* And what are your thoughts working with the voice of ECW, especially since you made no secret of the fact you disliked that company so much?**

**LAWLER:** I thought Joey did a great job at Taboo Tuesday. Like J.R., he has a genuine passion for the business and knows about as much about wrestling as a man who has never done it can know. I really have nothing against Joey, and I think we can work well together. It's definitely an adjustment. J.R. and I always seemed to know when the other would talk, and we rarely talked over each other. We had a great flow. That comes with time. As long as Joey doesn't go on and on about how great ECW was, we should be fine.

**BURKETT: If you could address Ross personally right now, what would you tell him?**

**LAWLER:** J.R., I had the time of my life working with you. You have my complete respect, and I will do anything I can for you. Hopefully, one day we can work together again. But in the meantime, get healthy, catch all the Sooners games you can, and enjoy a little vacation. You've earned a break, big guy. □



# "A Consummate Performer... An Awesome Human Being"

# EDDIE GUERRERO 1967-2005

**By Dan Murphy**

EDDIE GUERRERO, A man whose triumph over drug and alcohol abuse inspired a TV special titled *Cheating Death, Stealing Life: The Eddie Guerrero Story,* was found dead in his Minneapolis hotel room on the morning of November 13. Guerrero was 38 years old.

Guerrero arrived in Minneapolis late the previous night with nephew Chavo Guerrero Jr. for a WWE "supershow," a joint *Raw* and *Smackdown* TV taping, at which he was scheduled to face Randy Orton and Batista in the three-way main event. Many insiders expected him to win the World title in that match because Batista had suffered a torn muscle in his back and was expected to miss several months.

A preliminary autopsy determined the cause of death to be heart failure. Eddie's wife Vickie told wwe.com, his heart showed signs of heart disease with his heart being enlarged and his blood vessels narrowed and worn.

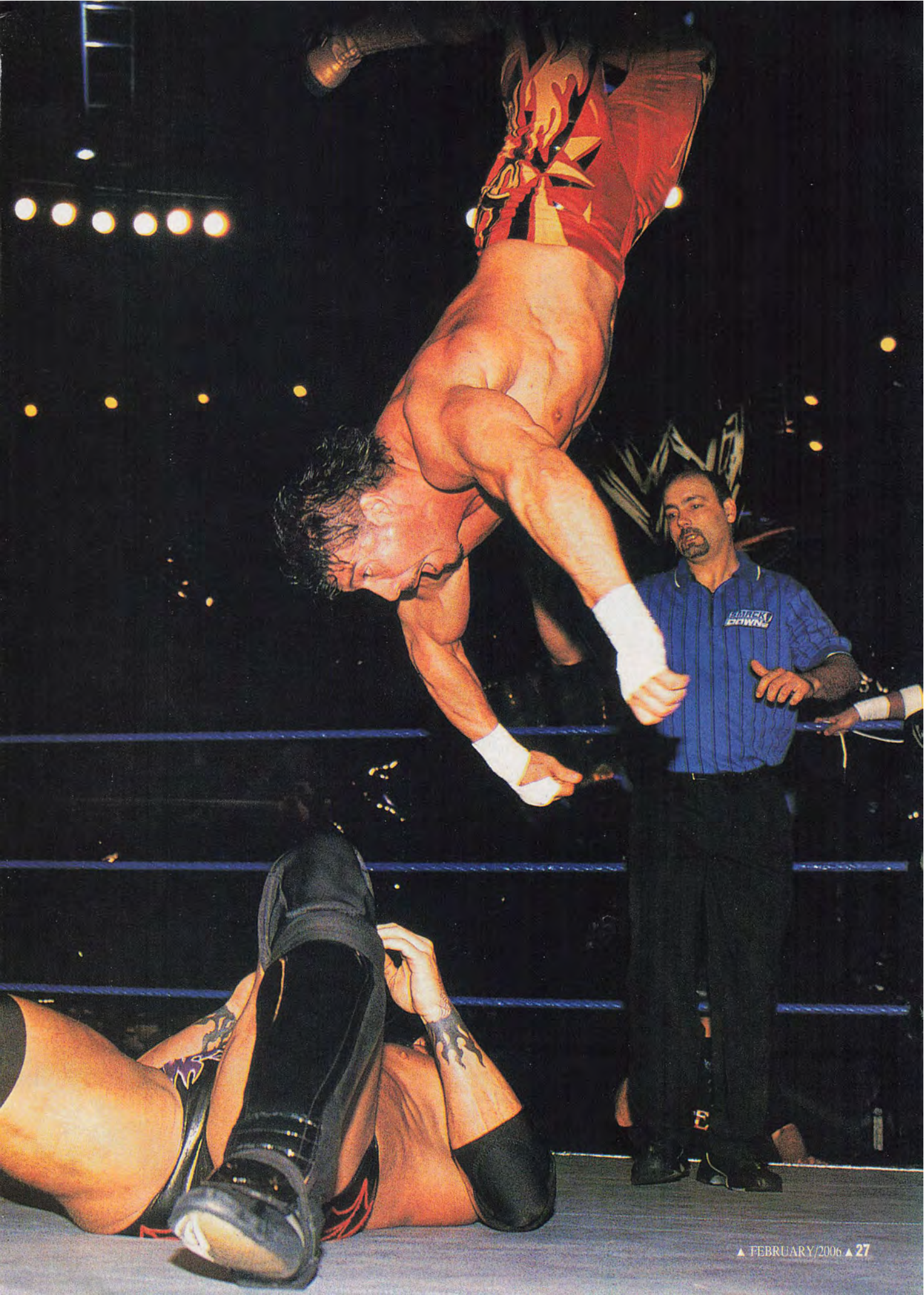
"This is a huge loss," Vince McMahon said in a press conference held hours after Guerrero's body was found. "Eddie was a wonderful, fun-loving human being. Eddie was a consummate performer."

Chavo Jr., who discovered Eddie's body and tried to resuscitate him, joined McMahon in the press conference and said Eddie had been sober and drug-free for four years. Chavo, who had shared a late-night dinner with his uncle after they arrived in town, also supported the decision to continue on with that night's supershow, saying, "Eddie would want the show to go on."

Both the *Raw* and *Smackdown* shows taped that night were made tribute shows dedicated to Guerrero.

Guerrero was born on October 9, 1967, in Juarez, Mexico. Eddie followed in the footsteps of his father, Gory, and elder brothers, Mando, Chavo Sr., and Hector, and made his pro wrestling debut in 1987. Guerrero blended the traditional Lucha Libre style with American and Japanese influences and formed a successful tag team with El Hijo del Santo.

In 1993, Guerrero began teaming with "American Love Machine" Art Barr as Los Gringos Locos (with Louie Spicolli and Konnan). The Gringos were one of the most reviled teams in Mexi-


SMACK DOWN!

can wrestling history. Tragically, all but Konnan died before the age of 40.

In 1994, Guerrero debuted in New Japan Pro Wrestling under a mask as Black Tiger. That year, he also appeared in ECW, in which his matches against Dean Malenko and Chris Benoit earned critical acclaim. He collected two ECW TV titles before jumping to WCW in 1995 and won the prestigious Best of the Super Juniors Tournament in Japan in 1996.

Guerrero established himself as an exciting mid-card performer in WCW and earned a reputation for putting on exciting matches against a variety of competitors. In December 1996, Guerrero beat Dallas Page to win the vacant U.S. title. He turned heel in 1997 and won a pair of cruiserweight titles. He also had one of the great feuds of his career with Rey Misterio Jr., a man who would become his top in-ring rival over the next eight years. On New Year's Eve 1998, Eddie was involved in a serious one-car crash that nearly took his life. He missed eight months of action afterward.

You'd hardly know this is a picture of Eddie under a mask in Japan in 1994 unless you were familiar with his early days, when he shined as Black Tiger.

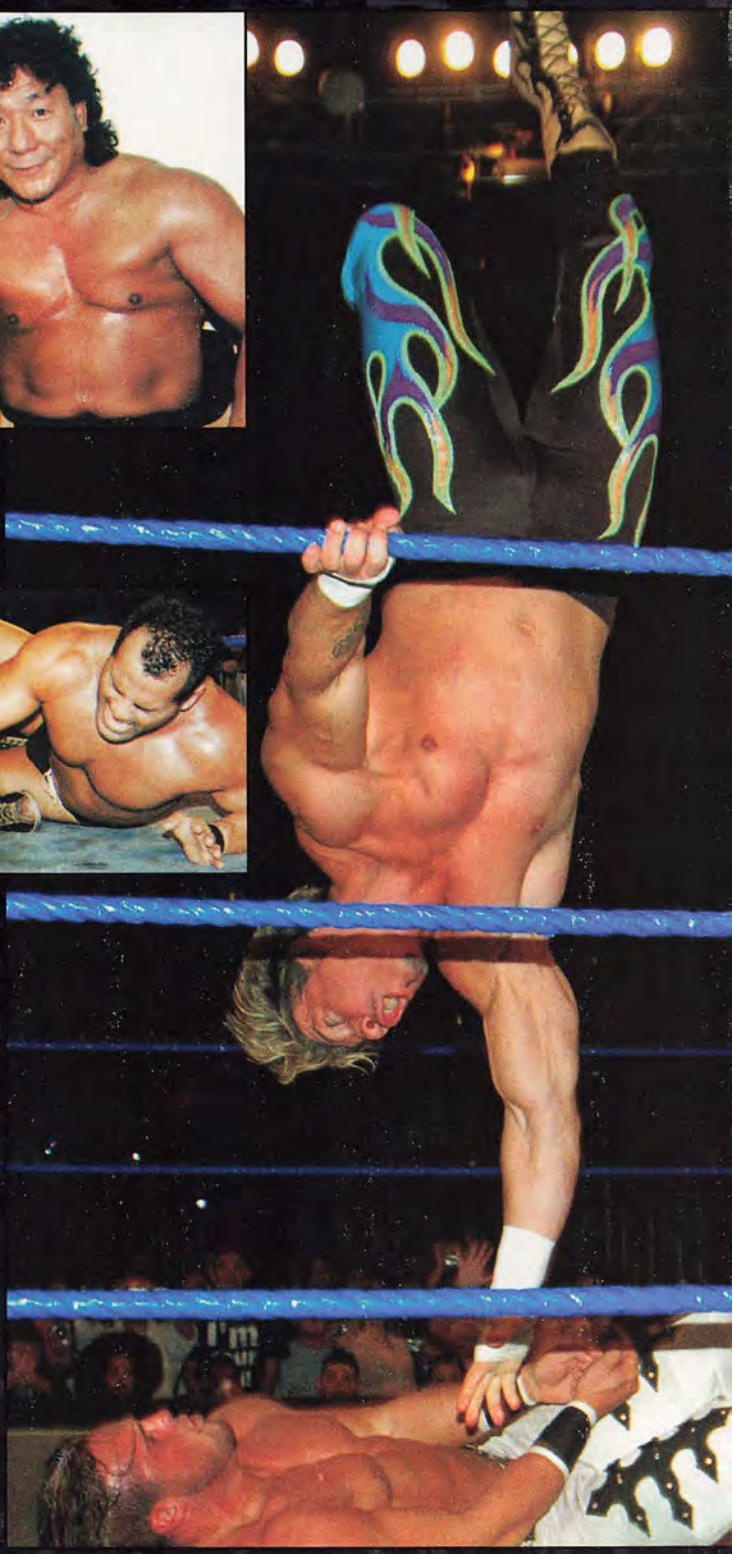
American fans first took notice of Guerrero when he wrestled an incredible series of matches with Dean Malenko in ECW.

In December 1999, he underwent surgery to remove bone chips from his elbow. The following month, he received his requested release from WCW and debuted with Malenko, Benoit, and Perry Saturn on *Raw* just six days later. The debut of The Radicals in WWE is considered one of the low points in WCW history and a major key to WWE winning the Monday night wars.

In April 2000, Guerrero won his first championship in WWE, beating Chris Jericho for the European title. Guerrero paired with his "mamacita," Chyna, and Guerrero unleashed his "Latino Heat." Guerrero's comic timing and delivery, combined with his incredible in-ring work and his charisma made him one of the promotion's most popular stars.

In September 2000, Guerrero showed his "lying, cheating, and stealing" ways, pinning Chyna in a three-way match that also involved Kurt Angle to win the Intercontinental title.

In June 2001, Guerrero's addictions got the best of him. He was sent to rehab after being sent home from a WWE TV taping and was released from his contract four months later. Days after his release, Guerrero was arrested for driving while intoxicated.



Guerrero sure knew how to give people a great show once the bell rang. Plus he had such charisma and a special connection to fans.

Family was so important to Eddie. He may have feuded with nephew Chavo Jr. in the ring a few times, but they were like brothers away from the arenas.

With his personal and professional lives in tatters, Guerrero recommitted himself to conquering his personal demons and making it back to WWE. He began competing extensively on the independent circuit and abroad. After strong showings in WWA, IWA Mid-South, New Japan, and other promotions, Guerrero impressed WWE management with his dedication and genuine desire to make amends and was re-signed in March 2002. More importantly, his wife and children gave him another chance.

Upon his return to WWE, Guerrero quickly beat Rob Van Dam for the Intercontinental title and them went on to form a very impressive tag team with Chavo Jr. Eddie and Chavo won the Smackdown tag title at the 2002 Survivor Series. Guerrero had a run as U.S. champion in late-2003, followed by a brief but intense feud with Chavo.

At No Way Out 2004, Guerrero scored the biggest win of his storied career, stealing a win over Brock Lesnar to win the WWE championship. At WrestleMania XX, Guerrero pinned Kurt Angle, and then celebrated in the ring beside long-time friend and new World champion Benoit as the pay-per-view went off the air. It was a very emotionally charged moment.

Unfortunately for Guerrero, he had trouble adjusting to the pressures of being WWE champion and would later publicly admit it. He lost the title to John Bradshaw Layfield at the 2004 Great American Bash.

Guerrero went on to team and subsequently feud with Misterio throughout 2004 and 2005, and emerged as a top contender to the World title again in 2005. His odd couple pairing with Batista proved to be a crowd favorite, and Guerrero seemed to be on the verge of a second run as a world champion. He died at the top of his game, and his passing has been a devastating blow to the entire wrestling community.

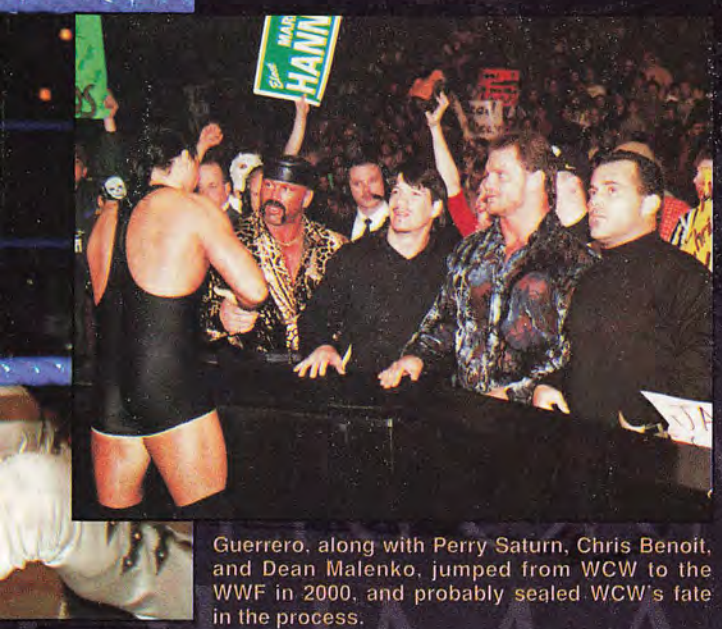
Even his old rival JBL got emotional during an appearance on MSNBC a day after his death, calling it "an honor to talk about my friend Eddie Guerrero."

Wrote Jericho on his Web site: "I've lost a lot of friends over the years, but this one hurts the most by far ... I have so many classic Eddie stories that I would love to share, but instead I'm just going to go and cry myself to sleep remembering what an awesome human being Eddie was and will always be."

Even TNA paid tribute to him at its Genesis pay-per-view, held on the day of his death, with Konnan getting emotional before his match.

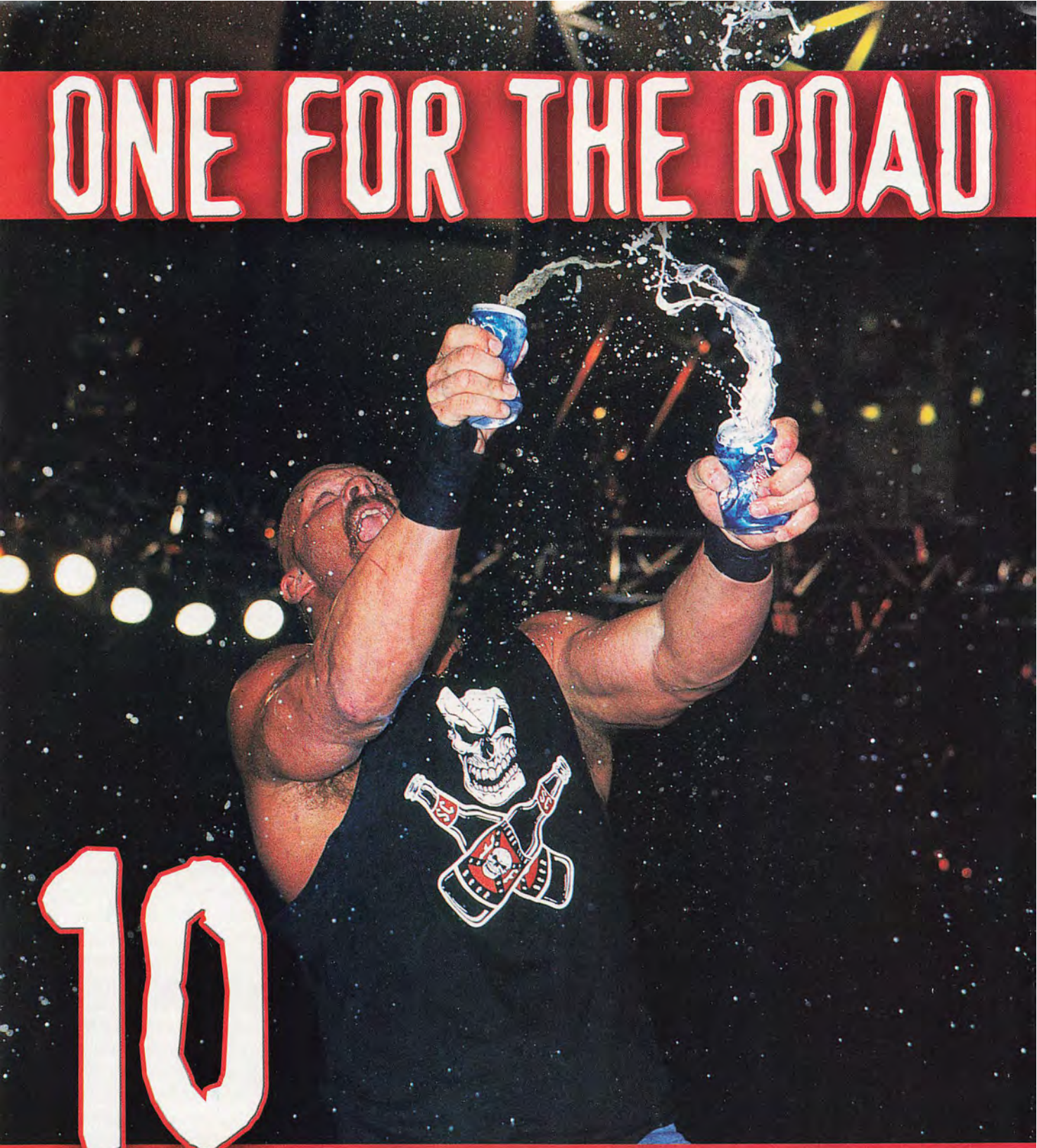
Guerrero is survived by his wife, Vickie, and three daughters, Shaul (14), Sherilyn (9), and Kaylie Marie (3), as well as his three brothers, two sisters, and his mother. □

One of many unusual storylines of which Guerrero was a focal point was his creation of the Latino World Order in WCW. He was sick of seeing Latinos getting overlooked by the company.



Guerrero, along with Perry Saturn, Chris Benoit, and Dean Malenko, jumped from WCW to the WWF in 2000, and probably sealed WCW's fate in the process.

# ONE FOR THE ROAD



# 10 MEN WE'D PREFER OVER HOGAN FOR AUSTIN'S LAST BIG MATCH

**By Will Welsh**

THE STAGE HAS been set for a match between Hulk Hogan and "Stone-Cold" Steve Austin. Both men have talked about the possibility of facing off against each other with various media outlets, and Hogan increased the hype for the possible match when he made discussing it the point of his short appearance at "WWE Homecoming." The Taboo Tuesday fiasco with "Stone-Cold" notwithstanding, Hogan vs. Austin could yet be one of the headlining matches at WrestleMania 22.

For a number of different reasons (Hogan's age, Hogan's knees, Austin's neck, the probable lack of a definitive finish to the match), some of us would rather not see that match come off. Hogan has had his recent moments in the sun. He's looked great in the ring against The Rock and Shawn Michaels, and he even had a fun match against Vince McMahon at WrestleMania XIX. He should have no complaints whatsoever about his semi-retired life.

Austin can't say the same thing. He hasn't had any real matches since wrestling (and losing to) The Rock at WrestleMania XIX, yet he's been involved in ridiculous storylines that have taken a few bites out of his legacy. His stint as co-general manager of Raw was one of the lowest points of his WWE career, possibly only outdone by his stint as Raw sheriff, which came immediately after his tenure as co-GM ended.

No, that was not a good stretch for "The Texas Rattlesnake."

However, his appearance at "WWE Homecoming," during which he stunned Vince, Shane, Stephanie, and Linda McMahon, and his banter with Stephanie on the following week's *Raw* let us know that he still has a spark—and we don't want to see it extinguished by a potentially forgettable match with Hogan.

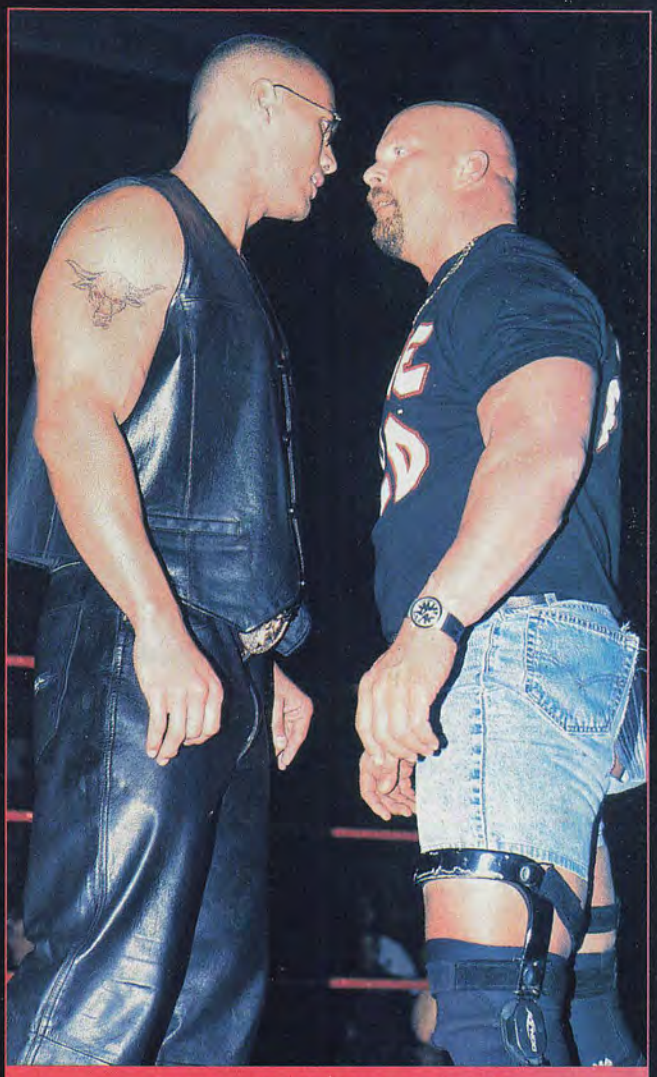
Austin deserves better than that for what could be his last match. He deserves one of these 10 men.

## THE ROCK

Austin vs. The Rock is one of those classic feuds that will never be forgotten by anyone who was lucky enough to watch it unfold. The chemistry that these gladiators had hasn't been replicated by anyone since. Nearly every time they stepped in the ring together, either as partners or opponents, it was magic—and it would be again, if WWE matchmakers choose to put this bout together. Rock's Hollywood commitments and the fact that Austin's original sendoff match was against Rock might keep it from happening, but all things considered, it still wouldn't be a bad route for WWE to go if it could be put together.

## KURT ANGLE

Angle came into his own toward the end of Austin's run on top of WWE. The men had a few memorable clashes and even traded the WWF championship in the fall of 2001. They also had their



Rock: one last last big showdown?

own share of laughs together during the time when Angle was Austin's little buddy. (Remember the two-some singing in backstage skits?) Since Austin's retirement, however, Angle has established himself as one of the best ever—maybe even *the* best ever, a title that Austin covets more than any other. There's no way that this match would disappoint.

## TRIPLE-H

Austin is the anti-Triple-H, which is kind of odd, as the only real difference between the two men is that Austin enjoys hearing the cheers from the crowd while Triple-H couldn't care less. Face it: Both will do whatever it takes to win a match, both disrespect authority, and both have Texas-sized chips on their shoulders. It's hard to imagine this match getting put together due to political reasons, but a feud with Helmsley culminating in a match against him at WrestleMania 22 would be high on our must-watch list.

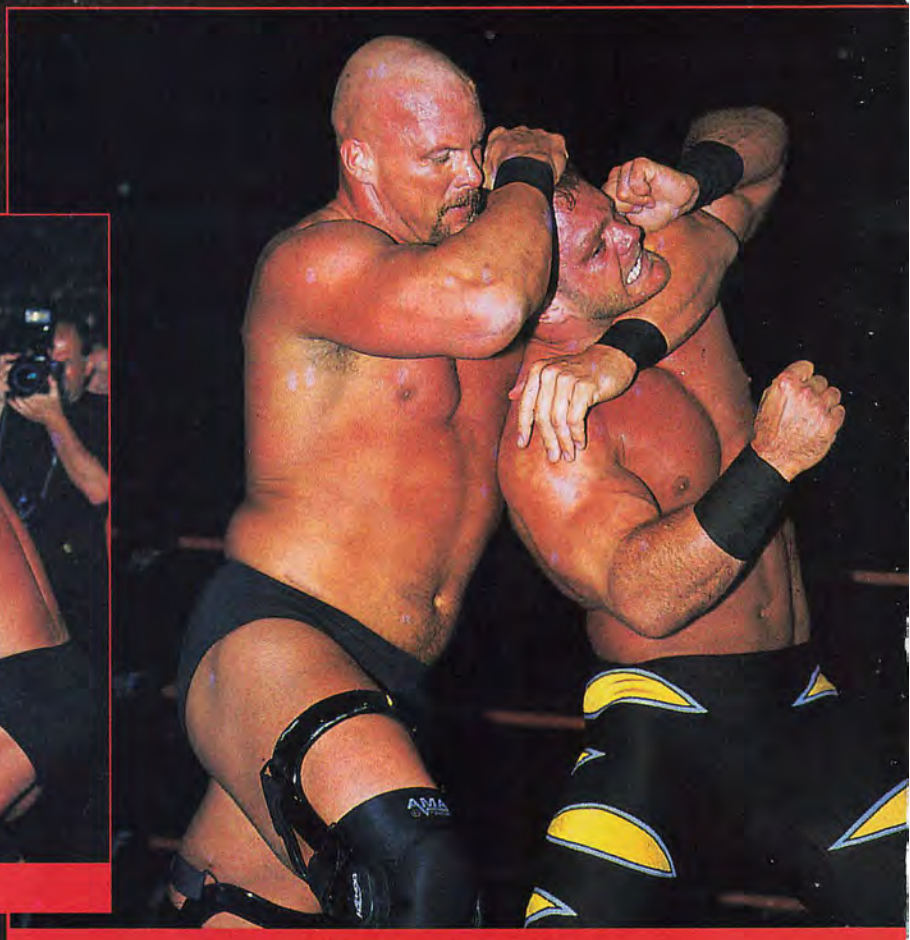
Triple-H: interesting on so many levels

## BILL GOLDBERG

The odds of this match ever happening, let alone in time for WrestleMania 22, are so far gone that it's probably not even worth mentioning, but we feel we must. At the height of the Monday night wars, Austin was the face of WWE and Goldberg was the face of WCW. Fans continually compared them to each other, and in our offices, a Goldberg vs. Austin match was the most popular dream match topic. When Goldberg finally made his way into WWE, however, he and Austin became fast friends, and a match between them never took place. If they were to go at WrestleMania 22, it probably wouldn't be the most well-wrestled match, but it would certainly be a spectacle.

## CHRIS BENOIT

Speaking of spectacle ... Austin vs. Chris Benoit wouldn't be one, as it's hard to portray any match involving Benoit as such. It would be, however, one dandy of a match. If Austin wants his return match to paint him in the best possible light as an athlete and a professional wrestler, then he should really consider competing against Benoit.



Benoit: grueling athletic test

## RANDY ORTON

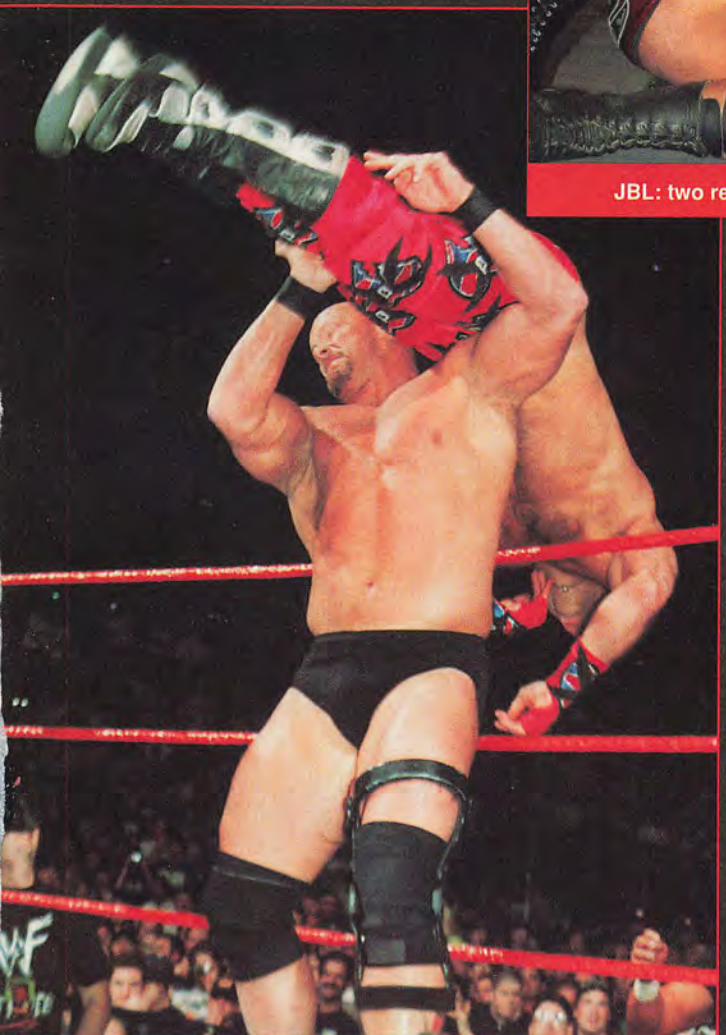
Is "The Legend Killer" through trying to kill off legends? He's beaten Mick Foley, The Undertaker, and Shawn Michaels, and he's even tangled both verbally and physically with The Rock. But he's managed to avoid "Stone-Cold" thus far. While Orton probably couldn't match Austin on the microphone (few can), he would force him to really

push himself athletically. Plus it'd be an interesting battle of the stunner vs. the RKO. Both finishers are variations of the same basic move, the Ace crusher. We'd expect Austin to be at the top of his game against such an arrogant young punk.

## SHAWN MICHAELS

The last time these two clashed, more than seven years ago at WrestleMania XIV, Austin defeated Michaels for the WWF championship. After the match, Austin assumed the mantle of WWE's top star, while Michaels carried his bad back into retirement. Fast-forward to the present day: Many are calling Michaels Raw's MVP and arguing that he's never looked better, while Austin is the one looking to come out of retirement for a match at WrestleMania. You know, Michaels never got a rematch following that 1998 loss. Perhaps it's time that he did.

JBL: two rednecks could mean lots o' fun



HBK: still hasn't gotten a rematch

## BATISTA

It's easy to picture the buildup to this match. Batista would have to turn heel, of course, but it would be worth it. He'd stalk Austin slowly and silently, jumping him from behind and giving him a bloody beating. A week later, Austin would get on the microphone and call the big man out. Batista would come out onto the entrance ramp and stare. Maybe he'd smirk. Then he'd go back, leaving Austin frustrated. Rinse and repeat. At WrestleMania, Batista would deliver a showing no one previously thought him capable of delivering—but he'd lose anyway. After the match, Batista would emerge with even greater respect from the fans and Austin would finally be able to shake off the "he-never-made-anyone" criticism that followed him throughout his career.

## JBL

Two rednecks, both from Texas, and both with massive egos. One wears jeans shorts and T-shirts, drinks beer like it's his job, and drives your daddy's flatbed to the ring. The other wears suits and ties, used to drink beer but probably now prefers Evian, and rides in a limousine to the ring. One calls himself a wrestling god while the other, well, let's just say that he's about the closest thing to it. You tell us why this match wouldn't work.

## JEFF JARRETT

Years ago, Austin balked at wrestling Jarrett because he felt Jarrett wasn't at his level. Now Jarrett is dominating TNA. What, you don't think WWE is ready for a TNA invasion? Oh, come on ... we had to throw it in here. □

devon

THE FUNERAL WAS FUNNY, BUT CANCEL THE BURIAL

# THE REBIRTH OF TEAM 3D

Photos By Vern Verna

By Jason Langin

DESPITE ALL THE negative reaction that some backstage wrestling segments have gotten over the years (Mae Young and Mark Henry, Kaientai and Val Venis, Katie Vick and Triple-H), there have been some moments that have been downright hysterical. There was the classic "Fuji Vice" segment with Don Muraco and Mr. Fuji. There was Roddy Piper frustrating trick-or-treaters on a Halloween skit from *Saturday Night's Main Event.* Plus, there were countless funny moments involving Mick Foley as WWE commissioner.

Photo By Lee South/TNA Wrestling

Father James Mitchell presided over the "funeral" for Team 3D shown on *Impact.* We laughed. A lot of viewers laughed. Some people in TNA even laughed. Team 3D didn't laugh.

Brother Ray got both members of America's Most Wanted for the price of one here. Wonder if Chris Harris and James Storm know how evil he and Devon can be.

**"While the TNA villains failed in their attempt to make the half-brothers from the town formerly known as Dudleyville laugh, they did succeed at something that they might soon regret. Team 3D is fired up. More fired up than they've been in years."**

Recently, TNA made its bid for funniest TV segment of 2005 when Jeff Jarrett and America's Most Wanted hosted a mock funeral for Team 3D on an episode of *Impact*. Weeks after leaving Team 3D beaten and bloodied in the ring, they came to the conclusion that they had killed their careers. It was ridiculous in its concept, but brilliant in its delivery. The addition of Team Canada to the mix with black hockey sticks in tow was fantastic. So was the inclusion of a guest book that featured the names of "Paul and Stephanie" and "Vince and Linda."

Had Brother Ray and Devon *not* been the focus of the joke, perhaps they would have found the segment entertaining. Of late, however, the team formerly known as the Dudleys has not been in much of a laughing mood.

And while the TNA villains failed in their attempt to make the half-brothers from the town formerly known as Dudleyville laugh, they did succeed at something that they might soon regret.

Team 3D is fired up.

More fired up than they have been in years. Maybe more fired up than they've been since they were inciting mini-riots inside the old ECW Arena.

The siblings have not had much to be fired up about in recent years. Despite their greatness, they had become a bit stale in WWE through no fault of their own. There was precious little viable competition in the tag team ranks, and hence the WWE brass didn't hesitate in giving Brother Ray and Devon their walking papers.

Team 3D was really hoping to start strong upon entering the six-sided ring of TNA for the first time, but the new alliance of AMW and Jarrett greeted the duo with frightening results. It was only their first night on the job, and BRD and Devon were left swimming in their blood.

The brothers were given time to recuperate, and the funeral segment strengthened their resolve.

"Those boys don't know what trouble they're in for," said Devon. "They didn't finish the job for one thing. That was their first

Harris certainly got the best of Devon the first time the teams clashed (below). We expect Devon to be plenty motivated to do a lot better in the future (right).

mistake. Now they got our attention. That was their second mistake. They don't want to make any more mistakes. Trust me, they've gone too far over the line already. There's no turning back."

Kip James, who battled against Team 3D on many occasions in WWE, said that the funeral was just what the team needed. "Team 3D is one tough team, and I've faced a lot of tough teams. They don't need any motivation to beat people up. That's what they like to do anyway. Now they have a reason. That makes them even more dangerous. I wouldn't want to be Jarrett, [Chris] Harris, or [James] Storm."

TNA is certainly richer with the addition of this team to their roster. The organization has enough great teams—from AMW and The Naturals to 3 Live Kru and Team Canada and then some—to keep Team 3D busy, energized, and focused for some time. It would certainly not be a surprise to anyone if the duo was wearing NWA gold within just a few months. It doesn't hurt their motivation that their new arch-rivals have those belts around their waists.

Clearly, this is a goal for the brothers. Winning the NWA tag team championship would put the partners in an elite class. They would be the only team in wrestling history to win tag team championships of four major, U.S-based organizations (ECW, WWE, WCW, NWA), surpassing in at least one sense even the legendary Road Warriors, childhood idols of Team 3D.

Watch your back, Mr. Harris, because BRD could strike at any time (right). History also tells us that Gail Kim won't be exempt from paybacks from Team 3D (below).

But, unfortunately for Jarrett and AMW, it has not always been titles that have motivated Team 3D. Tables, chairs, ladders, carnage, pain and suffering. Those are all Brother Ray and Devon's ideas of a good time.

"I want to personally thank Mr. Jarrett, Mr. Harris, and Mr. Storm for what they've done," Brother Ray stated. "I even want to thank Gail Kim, Team Canada, and Abyss for their participation in that riveting funeral parody. And if I'm leaving anyone out, I sincerely apologize. You see, they have all awakened a sleeping giant, or rather a pair of them. They shouldn't have done what they did, but now it's too late. It's done. Now the next funeral might have to be theirs."

There is a story in Greek mythology involving the world's first woman, Pandora. As a gift from the great god Zeus, Pandora was given a magical box that contained evils that would torment humankind. She was instructed to never open the box, but she let curiosity get the better of her. Pandora foolishly opened the box and unleashed wickedness and pain on the world.

In essence, Jarrett, America's Most Wanted, and friends opened their own Pandora's Box when they jumped Team 3D. They couldn't resist the temptation to antagonize one of the greatest tag teams in history. And, much like Pandora, the trio will not like the results. Evil and pain will be unleashed again—but in this case, they will only be unleashed upon them. □

Photos By George Napolitano

# LOSING STREET CRED?

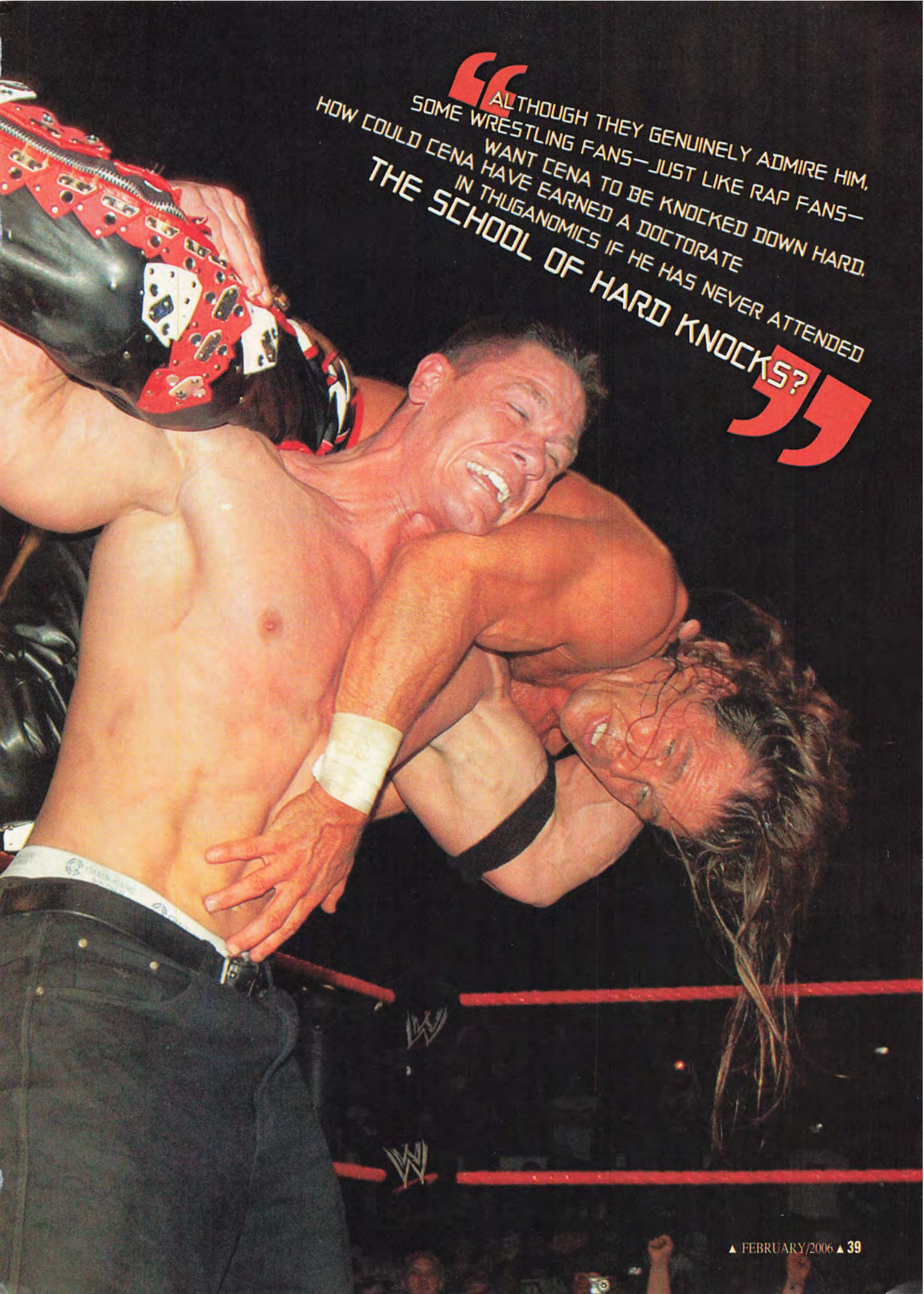
## TIME IS NOW FOR CENA TO GET TOUGH

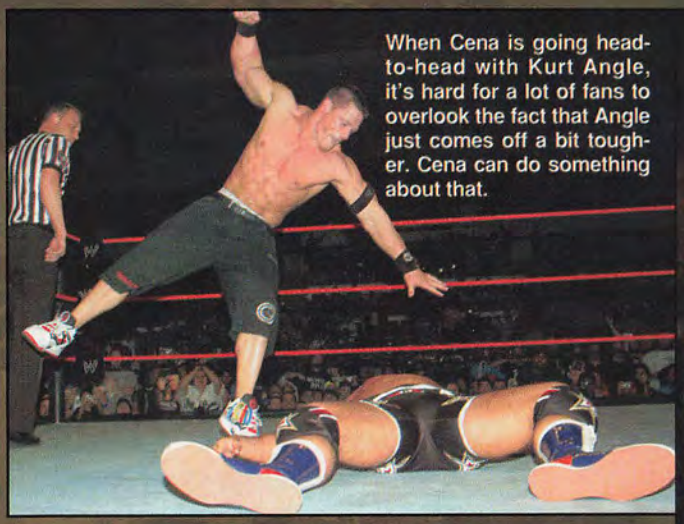
By Harry Burkett

"HIP-HOP PURISTS, after all this time, still haven't forgiven white people for the transgressions of Vanilla Ice. While they might couch their opinion with acceptable politically correct phrases, you could boil it down to essentially meaning, 'No white boy from a suburb like West Newbury, Massachusetts, has any business rapping.'"

That comment came from Steve Juon, who evaluated John Cena's debut CD, *You Can't See Me*, for rapreviews.com last May. Juon suggested that, as a rapper and hip-hop artist, Cena is very talented and possesses a natural charisma that will draw fans to his music. In the studio, Cena knows how to keep a rhyme and give a voice to the image he's trying to convey.

On the streets, though, Cena will have trouble being accepted by hardcore rap fans and the hip-hop establishment. To anyone who listened to his CD, Cena has an undeniable passion for the art form and wants to live the life. But as Juon pointed out


"ALTHOUGH THEY GENUINELY ADMIRE HIM, SOME WRESTLING FANS—JUST LIKE RAP FANS—WANT CENA TO BE KNOCKED DOWN HARD. HOW COULD CENA HAVE EARNED A DOCTORATE IN THUGANOMICS IF HE HAS NEVER ATTENDED THE SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS?"



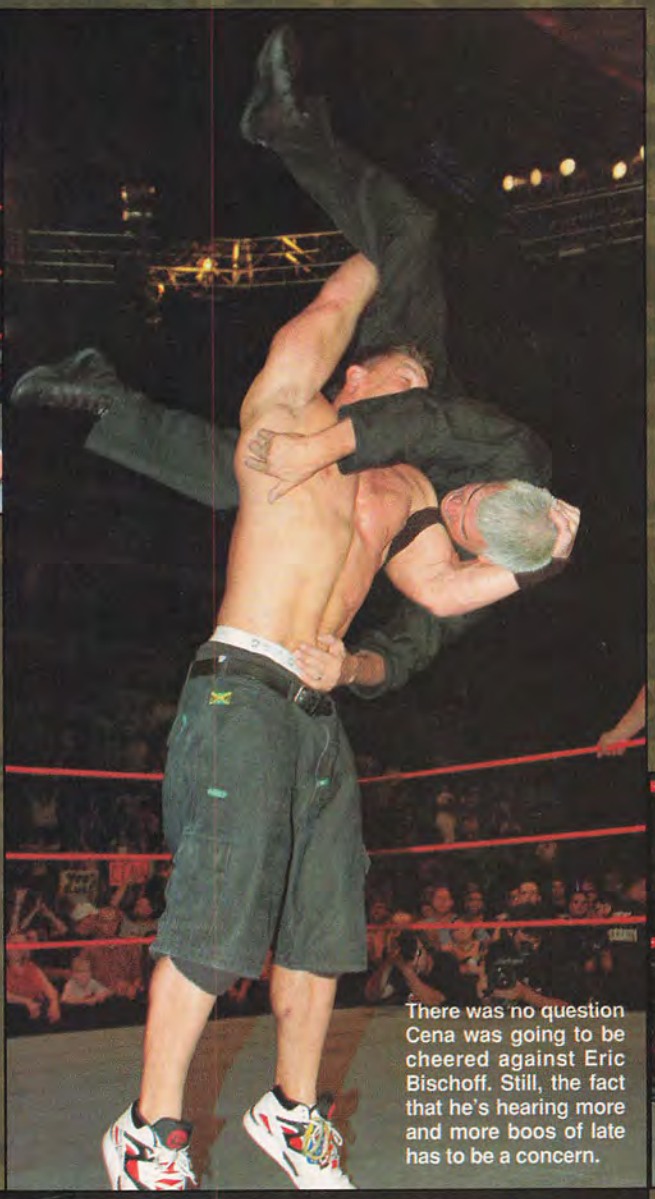
When Cena is going head-to-head with Kurt Angle, it's hard for a lot of fans to overlook the fact that Angle just comes off a bit tougher. Cena can do something about that.

so succinctly, an incredible transformation will have to occur for Cena to be truly accepted by the urban community.

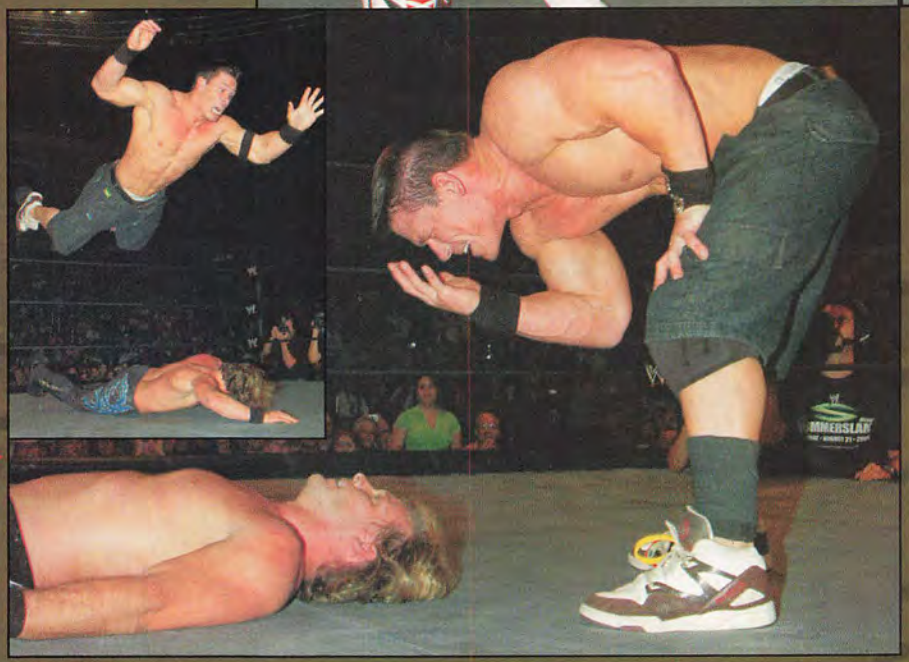
Here's more bad news for Cena: As of now, he's lacking street cred in the wrestling ring.

Of course, that's even worse, because wrestling is Cena's bread and butter, and he calls himself the WWE champion. How could Cena be the number-one wrestler in the industry and lack credibility? He remains very popular, has delivered solid pay-per-view main events over the past year, and has kept the WWE title since WrestleMania 21. How many more matches does he have to win? How much more successful does he have to be?

That's the problem. Cena might be having it too easy. Sure, Cena had to overcome the odds to defeat John Bradshaw Layfield for the WWE belt at WrestleMania 21, and he lost buckets of blood during their "I Quit" match at Judgment Day. Ever since Cena was drafted to the Raw brand, General Manager Eric Bischoff has tried to screw him over at every opportunity. Chris Jericho pulled one dirty trick after another before finally losing to Cena at SummerSlam. At Taboo Tuesday, Cena had to defend the title against not one, but two of Raw's greatest athletes, Kurt Angle and Shawn Michaels, in a three-way match. Despite being double-teamed by Angle and Michaels at several points during the bout, Cena planted "The Heartbreak



There was no question Cena was going to be cheered against Eric Bischoff. Still, the fact that he's hearing more and more boos of late has to be a concern.



Cena mocked Chris Jericho in a way only he can at SummerSlam (right), but Y2J also had him reeling at times (inset), and had a surprising amount of fan support. A lot of fans aren't quite buying Cena as WWE's top dog.

Kid" with the FU to score the pinfall.

Yes, Cena has faced plenty of challenges, but he manages to win every time. At the end of the night, there's always Cena, giving a shrug of his shoulders and flashing that smirk. Although they genuinely admire him, some wrestling fans—just like rap fans—want Cena to be knocked down hard. How could Cena have earned a doctorate in thuganomics if he has never attended the school of hard knocks?

Deep down, more than a few fans wanted to see JBL leave Cena in a bloody heap at Judgment Day. They wanted Kurt Angle to wrench his ankle and make him cry. They wanted Shawn Michaels to superkick the punk into next week. They want to see how Cena handles real adversity.

They want to see if the boy really has the stuff.

This couldn't have been more obvious at Taboo Tuesday. Although the high-pitched squeals proved that Cena still had the solid support of the easy-to-please teenybopper crowd, the murmur of deeper-voiced boos indicated he was being dissed by the core group of fans who mean the most to his wrestling and his music. When Angle and Michaels

It wasn't too many years ago that Shawn Michaels—one of Cena's rivals now—was being accused by some of being a bit soft. Cena could learn a lot by studying HBK's career.

dropped Cena through the announcers' table, many of the fans in San Diego responded with cheers. When Cena finally managed to re-enter the ring, many responded with boos. They booed again when Cena attempted the FU on Angle. They cheered again when Cena came close to tapping out to Angle's anklelock. Cena's victory at Taboo Tuesday definitely met with a mixed reaction.

"He can rap and he can wrestle, but that's not enough," remarked King Raj, an aspiring Los Angeles-based rapper who follows the wrestling scene. "And you can trust me on that, because I go back a long way. I'm like LL Cool J. I do the rap thing and I know the wrestling thing. I don't think none of Cena's friends were shot in the streets in West Newbury. The same is true with the wrestling thing. He's there at Taboo Tuesday, he's against HBK, who's wrestled with a broken back, and against Angle, who's wrestled with broken neck.

"Cena's problem isn't that he's like Vanilla Ice. He ain't vanilla, he's golden. Nothin' touches him. When he's beaten down and bloody, and nobody gives him a chance, but he comes back anyway, that's when Cena will get street cred. It's not about being popular in the streets, because Cena is. It's about survivin' the streets. The people know he's for real because he's got it in his heart. They just want him to prove it."

How can Cena prove his street cred, short of losing the WWE title or suffering a serious injury? Cena won't like the answer. King Raj and a number of wrestling insiders agree Cena will likely have to hit bottom one more time and show some vulnerability before fans will enthusiastically back him again. Unfortunately, that could mean sacrificing the WWE title or risking his career.

Yet there's another alternative. He needs to get tougher. Cena should bring back some of the heel persona he displayed during his formative days on *Smackdown*. If Cena proves that he's willing to risk his popularity with the fans, then—in a weird way—he might earn their respect. Instead of claiming to fight for the people and patronizing fans with all his talk of a Chain Gang, Cena should demonstrate that he's willing to sacrifice the CD sales, the movie deals, and the television appearances for the sake of going his own way. Right now, Cena comes off to some a bit like Sylvester Stallone in *Rocky III*—a champ living a carefree lifestyle in a bubble, growing out of touch with the cold, hard world around him.

Cena should already know the deal. In one track, "Just Another Day," from his *You Can't See Me* CD, Cena seemed to be struggling with this very dilemma.

*Everybody askin' me—what you really like?*
*Is this really life? Do you really fight?*
*Do you fear the mike,*
*when there's millions watchin'?*
*Are you super rich now,*
*how much grip you coppin'?*
*You the new kid, now you gettin' some shine*
*When every vet sayin' that it's not yo' time*

As with rappers, wrestlers who grab the gold too soon—without having enough street cred—are doomed to failure. The Rock had to turn heel a couple of times before it finally took. Randy Orton, the youngest world champion WWE has ever had, is still struggling with the consequences of too much too soon. Although Cena asserts that his "time is now," a lot of veterans are suggesting his moment isn't here quite yet.

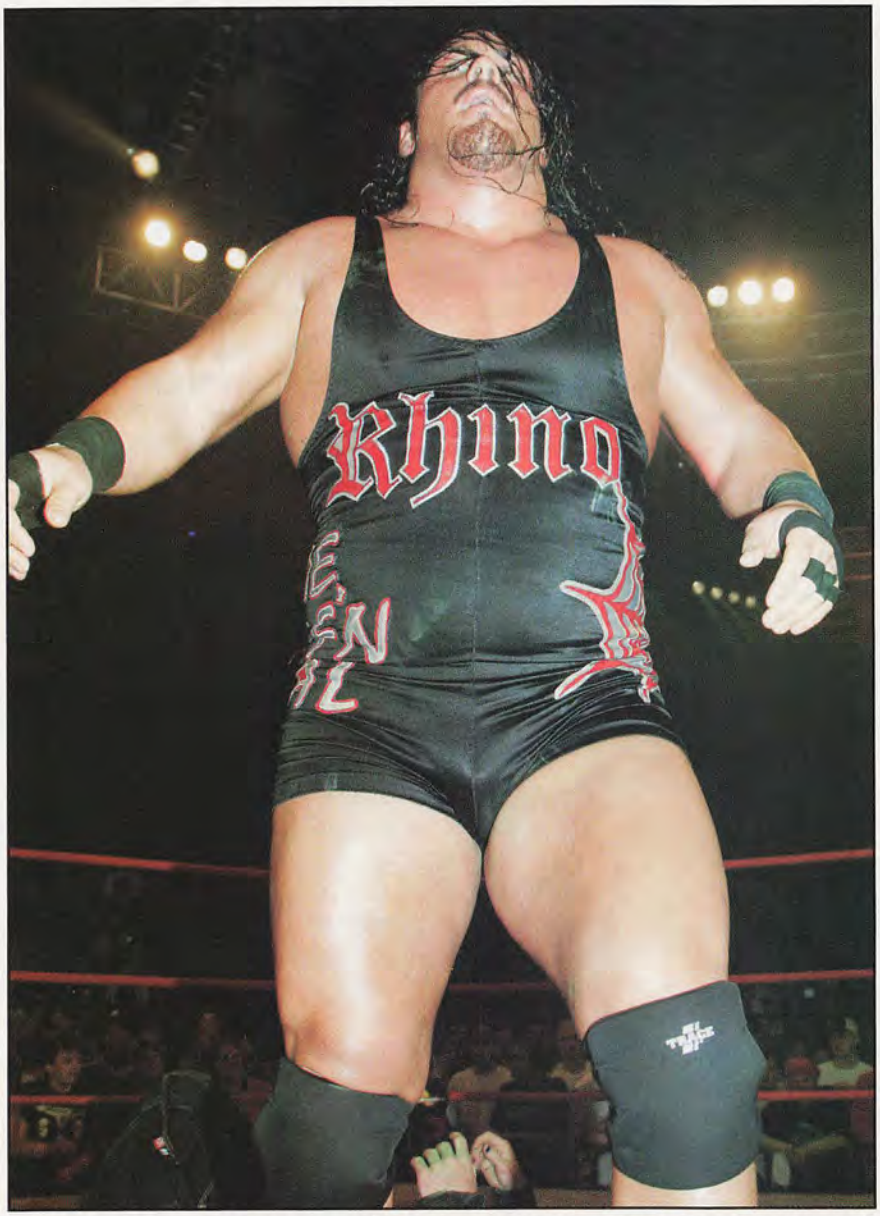
Cena still has a few sacrifices to make. If "The Doctor Of Thuganomics" claims to speak for the streets, he'd better start acting like it. □

# the business page

By Harry Burkett

**TNA makes prime time *Impact*...** History was made on November 3, when *Impact* made its first foray into prime time television, airing from 9 to 11 p.m. Eastern on Spike TV. The program scored an overall rating of 0.9, which, while not a bad number for Spike TV and TNA, still fell below hopes and expectations.

That mixed result was not because of TNA's failure to put together a show worthy of prime time TV. Jeff Jarrett defeated former WWE superstar Rhino to regain the NWA title in the main event, which probably was intended as a signal that TNA is on par with WWE. Unfortunately, the fact that Jarrett beat Rhino, who was a mid-carder in WWE, might have had the opposite effect.




Rhino hoped to be the big winner on TNA's first prime time special on Spike TV. He wasn't. And the TNA folks were probably a bit disappointed with the rating.

Nevertheless, *Impact* also featured excellent X division action, as Petey Williams defeated Matt Bentley and Chris Sabin in an "Ultimate X" rematch to become the top contender to the division's title. In addition, there was a sensational six-man tag team match pitting Austin Aries, Sonjay Dutt, and X champion A.J. Styles in a winning effort over Christopher Daniels, Alex Shelley, and Samoa Joe. Former WWE superstars Team 3D and Jeff Hardy were also on the program.

So, what is the possibility of Spike TV running more TNA prime time specials? There are actually more in the works already. *Impact* scored a respectable enough number to earn another chance, although that 0.9 was no better than the October 22 edition had earned in the 11 p.m. Eastern time slot on Saturday night. However, that might also indicate that Spike TV didn't adequately promote the November 3 special, considering that all of the October 22 viewers—and then some—would have most likely sampled the special if they had been aware of it.

Another line of thought is that perhaps prime time shows shouldn't be taped so far in advance. This special was taped more than two weeks earlier on October 18, the results of which were circulated widely on the Internet by its air date.

**Sid's psycho comments...** To be fair to Sid Vicious, his remarks on the Web-based *Voice Of Wrestling* program weren't that crazy, but just brutally honest—and maybe a sign that he has become disgruntled with the wrestling business. On the show, he discussed the status of his career and the likelihood of him ever

working for TNA or WWE again.

Judging from Sid's initial comments, TNA seems to be out of the picture. Vicious depicted TNA as being second-rate to WWE and went on to say, "That right there would be a worser way of cheapening myself than if I did an independent show." Moments later, Vicious revealed that he had a grudge against TNA, dating back to its very early days, when co-owner Jeff Jarrett approached Vicious about making an on-air appearance on one of the weekly pay-per-views. Sid said that he agreed to only make an appearance on camera because he was on crutches at the time, but TNA producers wanted him to do more than he was capable of doing.

Added Vicious: "I wouldn't waste a day working with them that I could be in the gym working out or at the track running." Ironically, Vicious received his first major push in Memphis nearly two decades ago when the Jarretts were major players in the promotion.

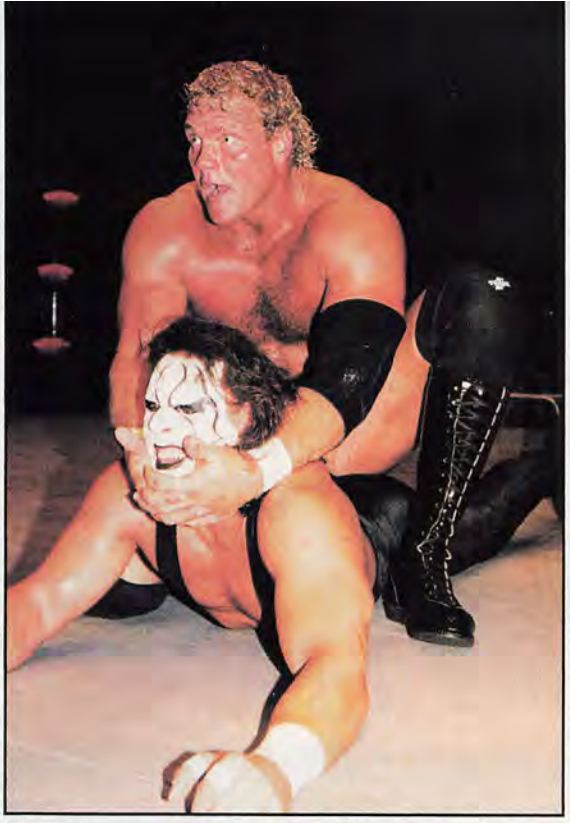
Instead, Vicious expressed his desire for a return to WWE, going as far as to say that he had devised an angle that would be a fitting end for his career, one that would involve (surprise!) him being champion. When questioned about his alleged failure to draw money over the years, Vicious pointed to his match against Hulk Hogan at WrestleMania VIII. Vicious also claimed to be among the "top two or three" performers of all-time, behind Hogan, but on par with Steve Austin and The Rock.

While there's hardly any impartial observer who would ever place "Psycho" Sid in the same category as "Stone-Cold" and "The Great One" (or, really, anywhere close), a former WWF and WCW champion like Vicious should have a place in WWE's legends program.

**British vixen found ...** Although details were sketchy at press time, British police confirmed that they have found female wrestler Sweet Saraya, who had been missing since August. According to the *Daily Mirror,* Saraya's husband and stepson have been arrested for falsely imprisoning her.

Police called off the search when the 34-year-old Saraya, whose real name is Julia Hamer, was spotted in southwest England. Saraya's husband, Patrick Frary, is better known to U.K. fans as Ricky Knight, and her stepson, Roy Bevis, is known as The Zebra Kid. Both men were held for the false imprisonment and related charges until they were released on bail. The perpetrators' motives, as well as Saraya's role in the ordeal, should be revealed as the investigation unfolds.

Let's hope all of this isn't some elaborate wrestling storyline. We don't need wrestling to be besmirched in jolly ol' England!



**If you thought Sid Vicious retired after he broke his leg in horrific fashion in WCW in 2001, think again. He believes he still has a lot to offer to WWE.**

## WWE Stockwatch

**(For the period of October 1 to 30, 2005)**

**30-Day High: 13.17 on October 3 and 4**
**30-Day Low: 12.20 on October 13**
**52-Week High: 13.47 on November 22, 2004**
**52-Week Low: 9.91 on May 4, 2005**

**Because WrestleMania is becoming—by far—the brightest spot on WWE's financial statements in recent years, it's no surprise that the McMahons are trying to keep those warm 'Mania feelings going all year long. WWE is cranking up the hype machine earlier each year, and the news that tickets for WrestleMania 22 sold out in less than two minutes on October 15 was a justifiable reason for the corporate brass to tout the achievement.**

**Already, it is guaranteed that more than 15,000 people from 16 countries and 41 states will attend the annual extravaganza on April 2 at the Allstate Arena in Chicago. A portion of WrestleMania II emanated from Chicago back in 1986, and WrestleMania XIII was held in "The Windy City" in 1997.**

**WrestleManiacs are sure to enjoy *WrestleMania: The Complete Anthology* DVD set, featuring all 213 matches from 1985 to 2005. The milestone collection went on sale at video stores nationwide on November 1.**

**The nostalgia craze continues, as WWE has added its 24/7 video-on-demand service to six more cable systems throughout the United States. WWE 24/7 can now be seen in 22 states and in Canada.**

# TV breakdown

## *RAW* (USA)

October 17: 3.7
October 24: 3.9
October 31: 3.4
November 7: 3.6

Analysis: How much has *Raw's* jump from Spike TV to the USA Network helped its ratings? Judging from the numbers beginning in mid-October, only two weeks since WWE's "Homecoming," the program's overall ratings dropped *below* its recent weekly averages on Spike. The final edition of *Raw* on Spike TV drew a 4.0 rating, while all four shows between October 17 and November 7 were below that benchmark. Although the returns of Mick Foley, Roddy Piper, Steve Austin, and Hulk Hogan helped boost the "Homecoming" edition of *Raw* to a respectable 4.4, none of them has been involved in compelling storylines since that night. Austin vs. Jonathan Coachman was never going to attract casual viewers from week to week. The callous dismissal of Jim Ross on the October 10 edition—followed by Vince McMahon mocking his colon surgery on October 24—might have turned off viewers who were offended by the vulgar ridicule of such a genuinely popular individual.

## *SMACKDOWN* (UPN)

October 13: 2.5
October 20: 2.6
October 27: 2.7
November 4: 2.6

Analysis: So far, Friday has lived up to its reputation for being a bad night for prime time television. *Smackdown's* overall rating has dropped by an average of a half-point since moving from Thursday to Friday. Two years ago, *Smackdown* was lauded for having more compelling, athletically based shows than *Raw*, and that seems to be happening again. The influx of fresh talent from Ohio Valley Wrestling—including Bobby Lashley, Ken Kennedy, The Boogeyman, Paul Birchill, and Chad and Tank Toland—gives *Smackdown* the potential to find a niche as the younger, hipper show. Unfortunately, not enough people realize it because of the Friday night death slot. Of course, all of this young blood is offset by Roddy Piper's feud with Bob Orton Jr., which seems headed for a one-on-one showdown between "Hot Rod" and Randy Orton. The November 4 broadcast featured the last WWE appearance of Christian, who chose not to re-sign with WWE after his contract expired on October 31. Christian teamed with John Bradshaw Layfield in a losing effort against Matt Hardy and Rey Misterio Jr. Interestingly, Christian was still paying his dues in his final match, being pinned by Hardy as his own partner, JBL, walked out on him.

## *IMPACT* (Spike TV)

October 15: 0.8
October 22: 0.9
October 29: 0.8
November 3: 0.9

Analysis: Most viewers would have already given TNA credit for producing fine athletic action, as evidenced by the X division competition that is featured on *Impact* every week. But who knew that it could keep pace with WWE in the sports entertainment department? The mock funeral that Jeff Jarrett, Father James Mitchell, America's Most Wanted, Gail Kim, and Team Canada held for Team 3D on the October 15 edition was priceless. Mitchell, Jarrett, and AMW did all the talking while members of Team Canada made all the appropriate facial expressions. That night's gauntlet match, however, with Christopher Daniels taking on a series of opponents, including Shark Boy, Sonjay Dutt, and X champion A.J. Styles, was the perfect balance to the funeral segment. With the October 22 edition, featuring Jarrett, Monty Brown, and Abyss' victory over Styles, Jeff Hardy, and Lance Hoyt, *Impact* earned a 0.9, its highest rating to date, which is better than *Sunday Night Heat's* numbers on Spike TV toward the end of its run. In fact, that program scored just as highly as *Impact's* prime time special on November 3. While that's a credit to the October 22 edition, it also demonstrates the measure of disappointment in the special's ratings.

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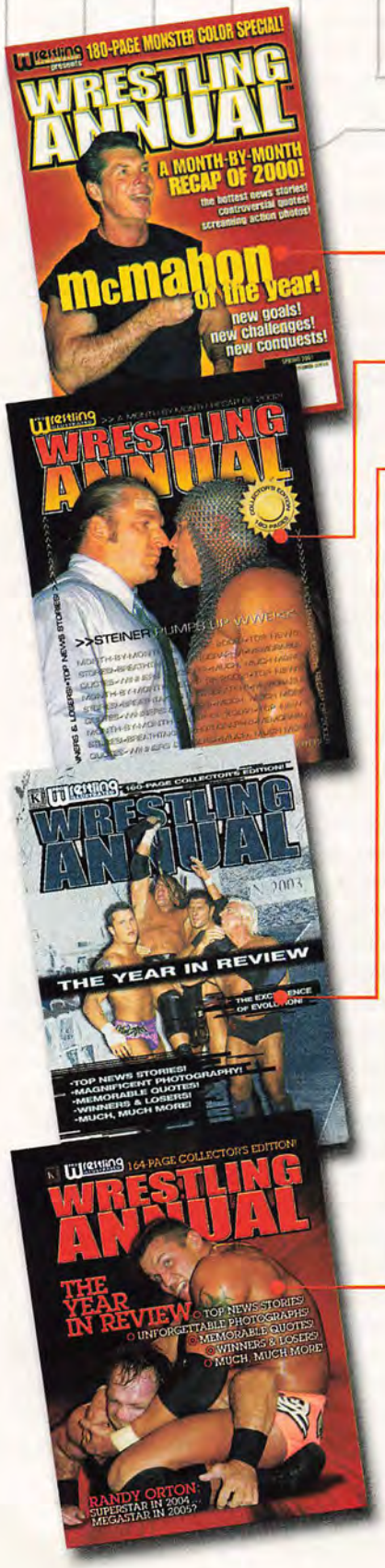


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# the steel cage

By Jason Langin

FOR MANY PEOPLE, January is a real letdown. The holidays are over and there is a long time until the next major one rolls around. Plus, in many parts of the country, January is the coldest, most punishing winter month. January just isn't much fun.

To a wrestling fan, however, January means the Royal Rumble, clearly an occasion to which we can look forward. This special match revolutionized the sport by providing fans with an event in which truly *anything* can happen.

While not all Rumble matches themselves have been considered top-notch, every Rumble has provided us with some memorable moments. With this year's version just weeks away now, here are 10 moments in Rumble history—presented in chronological order—that I found particularly noteworthy.

Here's hoping this year's installment will provide us with some more great moments.

**1. Harley Race has no friends (1988).** The inaugural event was a mere *20*-man match. That contest began with Bret Hart and Tito Santana, who were followed by Butch Reed and Jim Neidhart. At that point, Santana was the victim of a brutal triple-team. Jake "The Snake" Roberts came in fifth to rescue Tito and even things up a bit. So, early on, things were going about as you'd think.

Who better to throw a wrench in the works than Harley Race? Race had never been one to conform to anyone's standards and refused to do so in this particular match. When King Harley saw an opening to do some damage to fellow villain Boris Zhukov (unusual in the WWF at the time) and took it. Announcer Jesse Ventura astutely noticed the attack and noted that alliances weren't forming as expected.

**2. You guys aren't going to fight, are you? (1989).** In the initial *30*-man installment of the Rumble, the first two entrants were Ax and Smash, the two members of Demolition. Fans didn't know what to expect. Would the partners simply sit back and wait until the third man entered the ring? No. Instead, staying faithful to the rules of the match, they tore into one another. The short and grueling battle lasted only two minutes, as the partners quickly turned their attention to the third entrant, Andre the Giant. Still, this moment proved that there really are no friends in the Royal Rumble.

**3. A little music, please (1990).** In the more recent Rumbles, music has been played to introduce every single entrant. Back in the day, this was not the case. For one thing, not every wrestler *had* entrance music back in the day. But in 1990, music was used in an extremely effective manner for the first time. The hated Ted DiBiase was given the challenging task of being the first entrant. "The Million-Dollar Man" was able to outwit his first two opponents, but as he waited for the clock to introduce the fourth entrant, he was greeted instead by music—that of bitter rival Jake Roberts. As soon as the music hit, the fans rose to their feet eagerly awaiting a faceoff. The music added to the drama and anticipation of the confrontation. Since that time, music has been used quite effectively, especially in one-on-one situations.

**The 1992 Royal Rumble still ranks as the best, according to many. Ric Flair, Hulk Hogan, and Sid Vicious were three of nine former or future world champions to take part.**

**4. Finally, Hulk vs. Warrior (1990).** There had been memorable showdowns in previous Rumbles, but they hadn't come as huge as Hulk Hogan vs. The Ultimate Warrior. As Warrior tossed a last opponent out of the ring, leaving him alone with the "Hulkster," fans absolutely erupted. They were about to witness a battle between the two most popular stars in the company. It didn't turn out to be much. A pair of shoulderblocks and a thunderous double-clothesline. But it was just enough to whet our appetites for more—and the eventual *PWI* Match of the Year three months later at WrestleMania VI. It would be the first of many historic Rumble confrontations.

**5. The Road Warriors eliminate a "Dead Man." (1991).** The Undertaker had made his impressive WWF debut at Survivor Series two months earlier. But a mere nine months before that, the soon-to-be "Dead Man"—as "Mean" Mark Callous—was a victim of The Road Warriors in a Chicago streetfight in WCW. Now, all three men were fighting on Vince McMahon's payroll. The Undertaker has gone on to have an incredibly successful career, putting him on par with legends like the LOD. However, he was not in their league at this time. UT had been impressive in his first Rumble, but when Hawk and Animal finally had the chance to fight side-by-side, the great tag team was too much for "The Phenom." A double-clothesline sent 'Taker back to Death Valley to think about his future.

**6. Check out that roster (1992).** The 1992 Rumble is regarded by many to be the greatest of all. And the reason is the competitors that took part in the match. Yes, the match featured Skinner and Berserker, but the positives by far outweighed the negatives. *Nine* former or future world champions, including eventual winner Ric Flair. Throw five more future WWF Hall of Famers into the mix and you had the makings of a top-notch match. It gave us great moments from start to finish.

**7. Diesel cleans house (1994).** Kevin Nash's alter-ego obliterated the competition in this match, eliminating seven men. Nash set the stage for other big men to dominate in future Rumbles and gave us an indication that he just might be a pretty big star in the making. Even the mighty Kwang could do little to stop "Big Daddy Cool."

**Three Royal Rumble wins wasn't enough for Steve Austin. He didn't like getting eliminated by Triple-H and others in 2002 and returned to the ring to take out some of his frustrations.**

**8. What's Bret doing here? (1994).** Earlier in the night, the "Hitman" was the victim of a cruel double-cross and beatdown at the hands of his own brother Owen. Nobody expected Bret to take part in the Rumble. Yet, "The Excellence Of Execution" courageously hobbled to the ring and ended up co-winning the match with Lex Luger.

**9. Steve Austin, sore loser (2002).** "Stone-Cold", who had won three previous Rumbles, was one of the final four in this match, along with Triple-H, Kurt Angle, and, surprisingly, Curt Hennig. Austin, however, was eliminated and decided to make his impact felt one final time. Austin grabbed a steel chair, re-entered the ring, and blasted the other three competitors. That's how you leave a match, "Rattlesnake"-style.

**10. Benoit hangs on (2004).** The cheers of the fans in Philadelphia grew to an overpowering roar as Chris Benoit, the number-one entrant, clung to The Big Show with every ounce of strength left in his body. He was doing everything he could to try to eliminate WWE's largest superstar. And the crowd was holding on with Benoit, hoping he'd finally earn the right to headline WrestleMania. Their determination paid off as Benoit was able to pull Show over the ropes and gain the victory. No, it was not a super-exciting ending, but it was incredibly dramatic. □

# win, lose, or draw

By Harry Burkett

I DON'T MEAN any disrespect to The Crusher, who died on October 22, the result of an ongoing battle with a brain tumor and stomach cancer. But, being too young to have known the Milwaukee legend in his heyday, my only memory of Reggie Lisowski is that of an old man past his prime. That goes to show why knowledge of history is so important, whether it's pro wrestling or the Civil War. The people and events that came before us are just as important as the here and now.

Dick the Bruiser and Reggie "Crusher" Lisowski (right) were the AWA's dominant tag team when that distinction actually meant something. Both were inaugural inductees into the *Wrestling Observer* Hall of Fame.

Crusher was busting heads and tearing down bars before I was conceived—probably before my parents were conceived. And, with his tough talk and that fat cigar, he was the epitome of a wrestling bad guy.

Yet I didn't have such a great appreciation for Crusher when I first became aware of him. When Crusher and Baron Von Raschke defeated Jerry Blackwell and Ken Patera for the AWA World tag team title in May 1984, Crusher and the Baron seemed like a couple of fossils, compared to other duos of the era, such as Jim Brunzell and Greg Gagne, Rick Steamboat and Jay Youngblood, and Mike Rotundo and Barry Windham. For the first time, I got the sense the AWA was on a downhill slide.

"These old guys are the best tag team in the AWA?" I asked my friends ... before we erupted into guffaws of laughter. I thought the AWA must be hurting—and hurting bad.

Could you have blamed me? Crusher was 58 years old and Von Raschke wasn't far behind. In 1981, Crusher retired after suffering nerve damage in his arm during a match against the 474-pound Blackwell, who had angered Crusher by adopting his own nickname. When Hulk Hogan jumped from the AWA to the WWF two years later, promoter Verne Gagne persuaded Crusher to return and fill the void as the company's brawling fan favorite. Crusher was no Hulk Hogan.

And, since that time, I have discovered that Hulk Hogan is no Crusher. Frankly, I haven't seen much video footage of Crusher from his prime years in the 1960s and '70s, when he won three AWA World heavyweight titles and, with Dick the Bruiser, captured four AWA World tag team championships.

I do, however, have videos of a young Crusher on Fred Kohler's weekly television program out of Chicago during the late-'50s. Billed as Reggie "The Crusher" Lisowski, he sported a brown crew-cut and talked trash about his opponents, yet was always respectful toward the announcer despite being a heel. He stumbled over his words, but had a gruff voice and plenty of bad attitude. Moreover, he came across as completely genuine. Yeah, he was really going to have some brewskis after the show and raise some hell that night. Yeah, he was really going to rearrange Johnny Valentine's face—and he'd do the same to Buddy Rogers if the so-called U.S. champ would stop running from him.

That's the Crusher I've come to know during the past few years. That was not the Crusher I knew in 1984. Sure, Crusher still had the gruff accent and the bad attitude—and was actually quite polished during interviews. But he had a big paunch—and a lot of weary lines on that hard-bitten

face. The broads, the beers, and the stogies had taken their toll. His partner wasn't in much better shape. Von Raschke had lost what was left of his physique—and had to get by with a snarl and the iron claw.

Crusher and the Baron were ripe for a fall. But they were about to receive a steamrolling.

The Road Warriors, fresh from multiple reigns as National tag team champions in Georgia, had just arrived in the AWA. They immediately secured a shot at Crusher and Von Raschke for the World tag team belts. For Crusher and the Baron, the August 25, 1984, card at the Showboat Sports Pavilion in Las Vegas would be the equivalent of Gen. Custer's last stand at Little Big Horn. Overpowered by their opponents and overwhelmed by fate, Crusher and Von Raschke fought as if their lives depended on it.

**Crusher may have trained on beer, broads, and stogies, but he was among the most feared men in the game for the bulk of his brilliant career. The Road Warriors tarnished his legacy only for those who never saw him in his prime.**

Von Raschke suffered most of their wrath. The Road Warriors pummeled the champions before the opening bell, and Animal and Hawk went on to double-team the lanky German. The Baron finally tagged a fresh Crusher, who dominated Animal—a street thug who was over 30 years younger—for the next couple of minutes. "Da Crusher" showed a lot of heart and didn't take a backward step. He then tagged Von Raschke, who clamped the claw on Animal.

Crusher intercepted Hawk by knocking him to the mat. As the referee forced Crusher into his corner, Hawk leaped from the top rope and caught Von Raschke with a flying elbowsmash. The Warriors' manager, "Precious" Paul Ellering, continued to distract the referee as Hawk laid a groggy Animal over the Baron. The referee turned around and made the three-count.

The Road Warriors had a hard time with Crusher and Von Raschke, but Animal and Hawk walked out with the World tag team belts in only six minutes—and that led non-AWA fans to believe the match had been a one-way mugging. Even more telling were the cheers for The Road Warriors that reverberated throughout the Showboat that night. The match added to the Warriors' growing legend.

It was such big news that PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED dispensed with its traditional posed shot for the front cover and went with a fierce photo of Hawk snaring Von Raschke in a chinlock. In those days, hardly anything happened in the AWA that was ever worthy a front cover. The headline said it all: "Awesome Destruction! The Road Warriors Power To Their First World Title."

Although he stood up to the mighty Road Warriors, Crusher never recovered from the loss. He faded from the AWA and finished his career as an occasional preliminary wrestler for the WWF until his retirement in 1989—a full 40 years after his career began.

I find it ironic that Crusher's last stand took place against The Road Warriors, the team that was supposedly breaking all the rules, getting cheers when they should have heard boos. The Road Warriors are often considered the first in a long line of antiheroes that went on to include The Sandman, Steve Austin, and others.

As history shows, though, Crusher was cheered for being bad long before the Warriors burst on the scene. Crusher and Bruiser were the original Legion of Doom! "Da Crusher" was loved for being a bully, especially when he was picking on someone his own size.

Even as an unknowing youth, I never should have dismissed Crusher as a feeble old man. And I hope today's fans keep this in mind when they see legends such as Hulk Hogan, Roddy Piper, Jimmy Snuka, and Larry Zbyszko in the ring. They were faster, stronger, tougher, and sharper in their primes, but—in the year 2005—we should be satisfied with just a glimpse of what made them great. □

# the straight shooter

By Dan Murphy

OCTOBER IS SUPPOSED to be a scary month, but WWE's TV offerings had to scare the pants off any fans and investors paying attention.

**October 3:** *Raw* returns to the USA Network with the vaunted three-hour "Homecoming" special. The event features Roddy Piper (age 49), Bob Orton Jr. (55), Billy Graham, (62), Harley Race (62), Dusty Rhodes (60), Steve Williams (45), Jimmy Snuka (62), Greg Valentine (54), Nikolai Volkoff (58), Jimmy Hart (62), and a host of others, making the show look like a Cauliflower Alley Club reunion.

That's an awful lot of old-timers on the company's flagship program, but seeing as it was meant to be a nostalgia show, that was to be expected. But what about the rest of the month?

**October 7:** *Friday Night Smackdown* features a handicap match pitting Randy and Bob Orton Jr. against Piper. It also features Road Warrior Animal (43) teaming with Heidenreich.

Okay, well, Animal has made a somewhat impressive comeback, and with Piper and Orton around, it only makes sense for them to clash once, right?

**October 10:** *Raw* features Doink the Clown, portrayed by Steve Lombardi (43). A pretty odd idea, but it makes sense given Rob Conway's war against WWE "legends." Still, something doesn't quite feel right.

**October 14:** "Cowboy" Bob is back in action, teaming with Randy against Batista and Eddie Guerrero. Animal is there, too. For some reason, the matches seem to be moving much slower than usual. Oh, and The Boogeyman (41-year-old rookie) smashes a clock over his own head in Teddy Long's office.

**October 17:** Mick Foley (40) is back, trading barbs with Carlito on "Carlito's Cabana." Ric Flair (56) also returns from injuries sustained at the hands of Triple-H at "Homecoming" and chases HHH off with a baseball bat.

**October 28:** Orton and Piper are back in the ring, and this time it's in the main event, a six-man match pitting Batista, Guerrero, and Piper against Ken Kennedy and the Ortons. That's right: Piper and Orton (combined age 104) are main event talents for Smackdown these days.

**October 31:** "Hacksaw" Jim Duggan (51), Kamala (55), and Jimmy Snuka (62) run—or power-walk—to the ring to save Eugene from a beatdown from Conway. Jerry Lawler (56) evens gets in on the fun with his fist-drop from the second turnbuckle. Things get even weirder when Goldust (39) and a shockingly obese Vader (48) show up to beat up Batista.

Maybe WWE Creative needs to take a peek at a calendar. This is 2005, not 1995, and certainly not 1985.

I'm all for nostalgia every once in a while. I got a kick out of seeing Kamala back on WWE TV, for example, and watching Kevin Von Erich break out the iron claw. But when the old-timers start to get more play than the current roster, something very scary is happening.

Remember back in 1995, when Vince McMahon started running those "Billionaire Ted" skits, reminding us how old and out of shape Hogan and WCW's other top stars were? The

**It was a lot of fun seeing Hacksaw Duggan, Jimmy "Superfly" Snuka, Hillbilly Jim et al back in WWE for the "Homecoming" special in October. Dan Murphy, however, argues that we're starting to see far too much of the legends on WWE TV.**

**Road Warrior Animal is still powerful enough to suplex two members of M-N-M at once. M-N-M could be a hot act in WWE for many years to come. But they lost a lot of steam after crashing head-on into this star of the past.**

WWF was supposed to be the polar opposite of WCW's old-timers show. The WWF had all the fresh, young stars who were working longer, more physical matches. What happened?

During the month of October, Jim Ross, Vince and Linda McMahon, Steve Austin, Michaels, and Flair were all major parts of the top storylines. Valentine actually got a tryout for a full-time position, and Vader was brought back despite being mostly out of wrestling—and apparently the gym—for three years. Coincidentally, Matt Striker, Shelton Benjamin, Paul London, and Brian "Spanky" Kendrick never competed on either *Raw* or *Smackdown,* but were banished to "B" show obscurity.

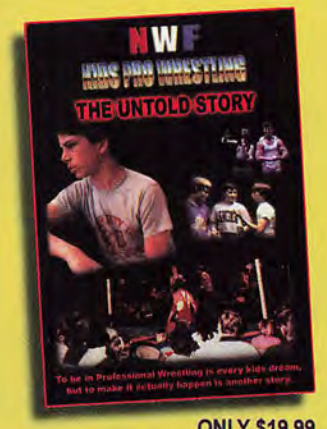
What happened to building new stars? What happened to ultra-athletic, innovative matches? Has the "Attitude" era hit a midlife crisis?

When WWE brings in all these stars from yesterday, it only underscores the fact that the current crop of WWE stars lacks the star appeal of Piper, Foley, and Flair. They are obviously in superior physical condition and are terrific athletes, but they just don't resonate with the fans the way the legends do. So many have the *potential* to do so, however. But they're not going to get a chance to improve so long as WWE Creative keeps filling so much valuable TV time with stars who retired from full-time duty before some of today's fans were out of diapers.

It's time to build new superstars and stop resting on the laurels of the past. WCW has been dead and buried for five years, and we're *still* seeing WWE go and make some of same mistakes that did in the competition. It's getting frustrating.

It's about time somebody at WWE was held accountable. Has McMahon once again allowed his massive ego to get in the way of sound business decisions? Is John Laurinaitis to blame? Laurinaitis wielded a lot of power in WCW as that promotion crumbled, and he's been head of talent relations in WWE since 2004. Oh, and he's the brother of Road Warrior Animal. Pretty coincidental, huh?

One thing is for sure: Something stinks in WWE today. And it just might be somebody's soiled Depends. □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**You're at the airport. You see your favorite wrestler relaxing in one of the terminals. You rush up to him or her as questions fill your excited mind. There are certain things you just *have* to know about this person. Well, these are the 12 questions you'd never think of asking**

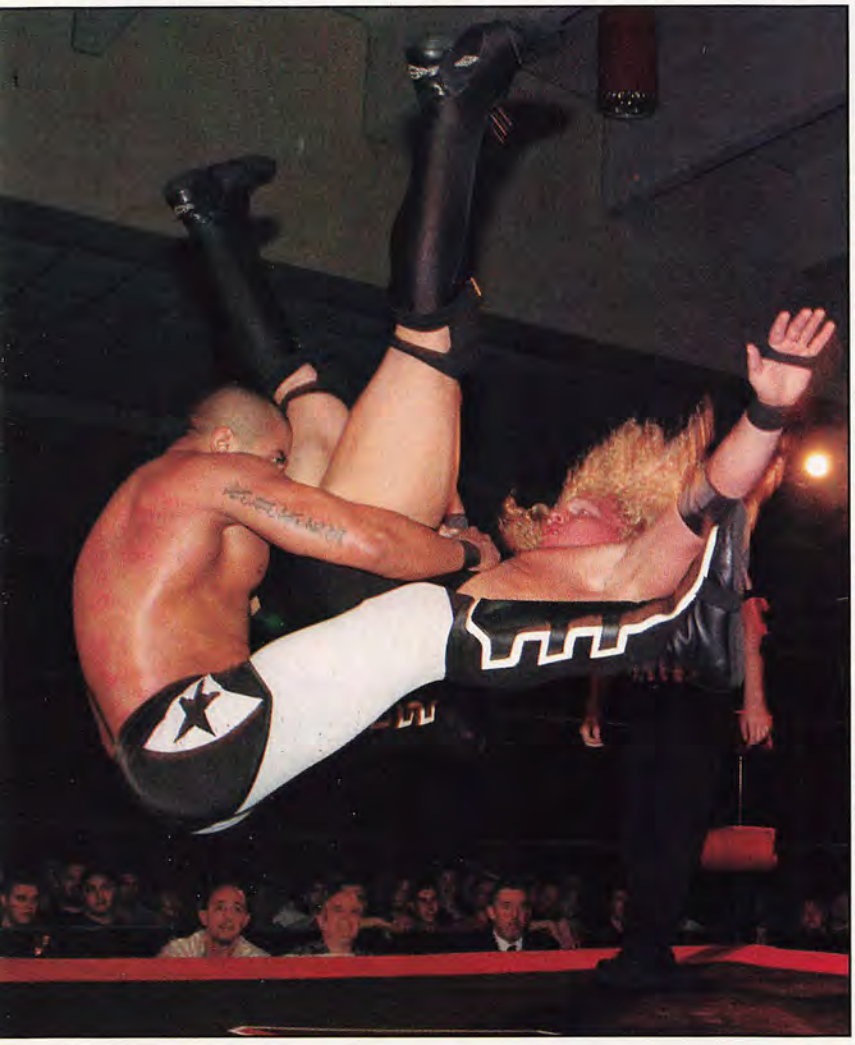
# 12 questions

## RICKY REYES

**Aren't you a Havana Pit Bull?**
Yes.

**Where's the other one?**
*Ahhhhhh* ... the other one?

**Are you sure you didn't eat him?**
No, Samoa Joe ate him with a salad.



**Who is the tiniest wrestler you have wrestled—and minis don't count?**
Virus, the former CMLL super lightweight champ. But at least I didn't lose the belt to him like my partner, Rocky Romero, did.

**What did you think of the Raw diva search?**
Big, fat waste of time. That's what strip clubs are for!

**You recently moved to the East Coast. How well do you drive in the snow?**
*Ahhhhhh* ... snow?

**You're a *Family Guy* mark. What really grinds your gears?**
You know what really grinds my gears? Shakira. Sure, Shakira, you're up there shaking that thing and I'm sitting here with my beer. Are we gonna go out? What? *What!* What do you want? You want nothing. *Nothing.* That really grinds my gears!

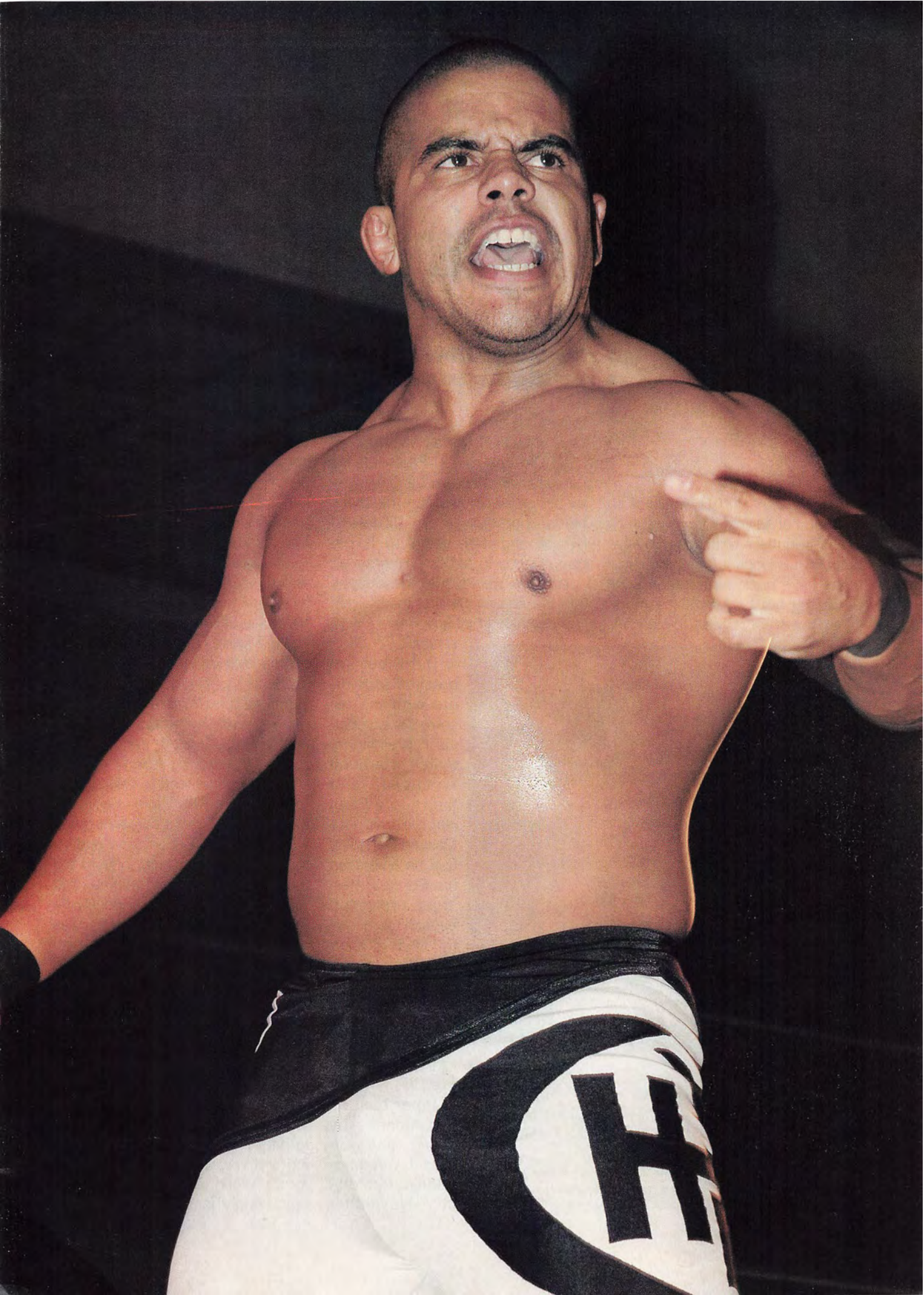
**Rumor has it that you have a sneaker fetish. Please explain.**
Damn you! Damn you all! So I like shoes!

**You have a choice between Anna Nicole Smith, Paul Bearer, and Jim Hellwig to live with on a deserted island for the rest of your life. Which would you choose and why?**
Anna Nicole Smith because her implants are flotation devices and we could float our way out of there.

**What bothers you more: an obese person ordering a large dinner and a Diet Coke or a skinny person who can eat whatever he or she wants and not gain an ounce?**
The fat person because you know that they go home when they're done and tear into a pizza or burgers, like Samoa Joe.

**Which is easier: asking permission or saying I'm sorry afterward?**
Asking permission, because I don't say I'm sorry.

**You have a hammer, a midget, and a roulette wheel. What are you plans for the evening?**
To hammer the midget to the roulette wheel. I have nothing clever for you. Sorry. □



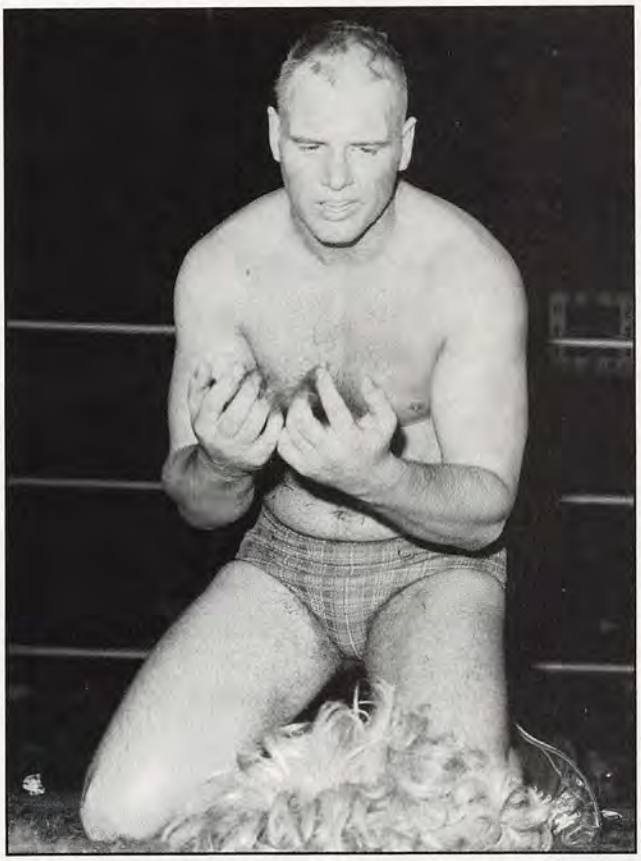
## The Wrestling Observer
# Hall of Fame

**In each issue, *PWI* will honor one member of the *Wrestling Observer* Hall of Fame, which we recognize as the sport's official Hall of Fame**

## Roddy Piper

AS RODDY PIPER himself is so fond of saying, if there wasn't a Piper, there wouldn't ever have been a Hulk Hogan. And there might never have been WrestleMania. Piper might not be far off the mark. "The Rowdy Scot" was the WWF's hottest heel of the mid-1980s, the Lex Luthor to Hogan's Superman.

At the age of 12, Piper left his home in Saskatchewan, finding shelter at youth hostels where he could. He learned how to box to defend himself, and at the age of 15, he began training to become a wrestler. Just a few weeks later, he stepped into the ring for his first match, getting destroyed by Larry Hennig in 10 seconds.



Roddy Piper was obviously not a happy man after losing his hair in a match with Chavo Guerrero Sr. in Los Angeles in 1976.

But Piper impressed promoters with his resolve. He competed in preliminary matches around Winnipeg and then toured Los Angeles as The Masked Canadian until he embraced his Scottish heritage and billed himself as "Rowdy" Roddy Piper. In March 1976, Piper won his first major championship, beating Chavo Guerrero Sr. for the NWA Americas title.

Piper built on his success by joining Jim Crockett's NWA Mid-Atlantic territory. In November 1980, Piper won a tournament for the Mid-Atlantic TV title. He then began his epic feud with Ric Flair, beating him for the U.S. title. Problems would flare up between Piper and Flair many times over the next two decades.

In April 1983, Piper defeated Greg Valentine for the NWA U.S. title. The feud between Piper and Valentine became one of the bloodiest of Piper's career, culminating in a gory dog-collar match at Starrcade 1983. Valentine repeatedly slammed the chain into Piper's ear, causing hearing loss and equilibrium damage. Doctors told Piper his career was over.

But Piper refused to walk away. In January 1984, Piper made the biggest move of his career, signing with the WWF. His unsurpassed interview style made him one of the federation's top personalities, and Piper was given his own weekly interview segment, "Piper's Pit." It was a groundbreaking innovation—an interview segment designed to build Piper's unique character while simultaneously spotlighting other stars. The "Pit" has spawned dozens of imitators over the past two decades.

With his bodyguard, "Cowboy" Bob Orton, at his side, Piper declared war on the WWF's "Rock 'n' Wrestling Connection." He claimed to hate what the WWF was becoming and vowed to beat Hulk Hogan for the World title. The Hogan-Piper feud caught fans' imaginations like

**The Piper-Greg Valentine feud was ECW-like (long before there was an ECW) in its brutality. It got so ugly that Piper ended up suffering hearing loss at one point.**

few others, and their Madison Square Garden matchup was televised nationally on MTV.

The event made both Hogan and Piper mainstream celebrities. Hogan beat Piper by DQ, and a tag team rematch was signed for the first WrestleMania, with Piper and Paul Orndorff losing to Hogan and Mr. T. Two years later, Piper became a fan favorite. He beat Adrian Adonis in a hair match at WrestleMania III and announced his retirement.

Piper's retirement turned out to be short-lived. After appearing in several movies (most notably *They Live* in 1987), Piper returned in 1990. He won his only title in January 1992, beating The Mountie for the Intercontinental title before losing it to Bret Hart in a thrilling match at WrestleMania VIII. Piper made frequent appearances in the WWF during the 1990s, including feuds with Jerry Lawler and Goldust, before jumping to WCW.

At Starrcade 1996, Piper gained a measure of revenge against his arch-rival, beating Hogan with a sleeper. In February 1999, he upset Hart for the WCW U.S. title, but Piper left WCW the following year.

Piper again resurfaced in WWE at WrestleMania XIX, interfering in Hogan's match against Vince McMahon, and began mentoring Sean O'Haire, but he was fired after doing a candid interview on HBO's *Real Sports*. He made several appearances with TNA in 2004 before being inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame in 2005.

Piper was one of the greatest heels of a generation and invented the modern-day interview segment. He was one of wrestling's breakthrough stars during the 1980s and elevated the art of the promo, proving he could draw fans simply by running his mouth like no other. □

**You never knew what might happen on "Piper's Pit." At WrestleMania V, "Rowdy" Roddy shut up loudmouthed talk show host Morton Downey Jr. with a fire extinguisher.**

**More than a decade after their feud erupted in the WWF, Piper vs. Hulk Hogan was revisited in WCW. Piper got the best of the "Hulkster" this time.**

# independent roundup

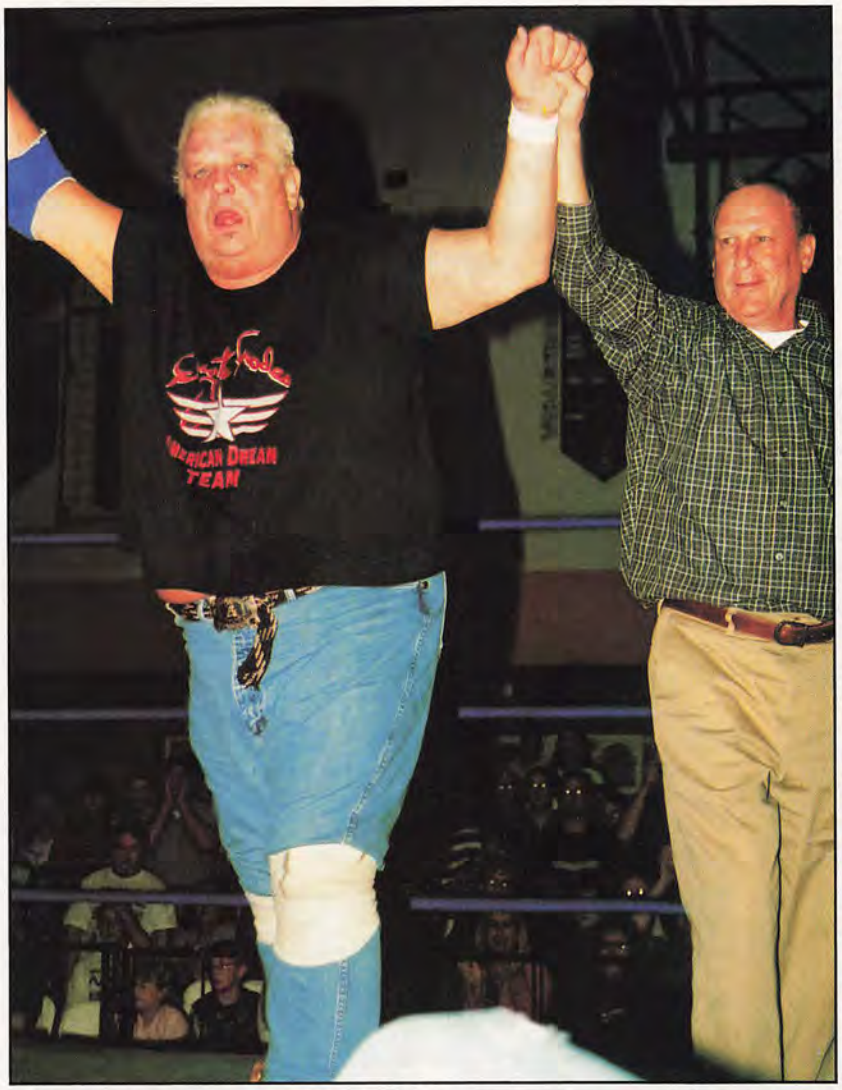
By Dan Murphy

THERE'S NO DENYING it—nostalgia is doing great business, even on the independent level.

More than 1,500 fans turned out for Ward Family Promotions' fourth annual "Night Of The Superstars" event on October 29 in Waynesboro, Virginia. Big names at the event included **Roddy Piper**, **Rick** and **Scott Steiner**, and, in their first big appearance since being fired by WWE, **Dave** and **Earl Hebner**.

Maybe in Montreal, the Hebners would be heels, but the twin brothers got their share of cheers in Waynesboro, especially when Earl made a "ref-in" during a match pitting **Dusty Rhodes** against **Bob Orton Jr.** **David Flair**, the special referee for that bout, turned against Rhodes, prompting Earl to take matters into his own hands and take over as referee. Hebner declared Rhodes the winner of the bout when "The American Dream" pinned Flair. Strange, but the crowd enjoyed it.

In other top matches, **Jerry Lawler** pinned perennial Memphis rival **Bill Dundee** in a match refereed by **Jimmy Valiant**, and **Maven** (in what was billed as his retirement match—let's see if that sticks) pinned former trainer **Al Snow** in a match refereed by NASCAR driver **Hermie Sadler**. For more photographic coverage and complete results of this event, check out "Arena Reports" on page 60.



Dusty Rhodes might not have known he had a friend in former WWE referee Earl Hebner. Thanks to Hebner, Rhodes was able to beat Bob Orton Jr. in a match in Virginia—but he did it by pinning guest ref David Flair.

It saddens me to have to report that **Russell Hardman**, who competed mostly in Michigan and Ohio as **"Sweet" Stevie Lee**, died on October 12 from a brain aneurysm. Hardman wrestled several WWE dark matches and appeared on *Sunday Night Heat* and *Velocity* in addition to holding several regional titles, including the WAR (Indiana) heavyweight championship. He also competed in Memphis and was extremely well-liked by his fellow wrestlers. He was only 33 years old.

After months of rumors and speculation, former ECW owner **Tod Gordon** officially announced his plans to start a new promotion. At a Pro Wrestling Unplugged card in Philadelphia on October 30, Gordon announced he will be creating the Xtreme Fight Club (XFC). Gordon then called out **"Pit Bull" Gary Wolfe**, **The Backseat Boyz**, **Annihilation**, and **The Sandman** and signed them all to XFC contracts on the spot. Gordon's old ECW partner **Paul Heyman's** contract with WWE is set to expire at the end of 2005, and rumors are swirling that Heyman might just end up joining Gordon in what could only be called an extreme reunion.

The winner of the fourth annual World

Xtreme Wrestling Women's Elite 8 Tournament on October 23 was **Alicia**. Alicia pinned **Ariel**, **Phoenix**, and **Cindy Rogers** to win the prestigious event.

In this month's bizarre stipulation match, Xtreme Championship Wrestling's **Hugh Rogue** beat **Drunk Adam** in a "Lucky 21" match. The winner of the match was the first wrestler to staple 11 dollar bills to his opponent's body. The match was tied at 10 bills each until **Steve Moody** interfered and allowed Rogue to staple bill number 11 to Adam and win the second match in an ongoing seven-match series between the two. No word on whether either wrestler was allowed to keep the cash after the match, but I think they both earned a little bonus.

**Former ECW owner Tod Gordon is getting back in the game as a promoter again. He is forming a company called Xtreme Fight Club. He's already signed several ECW alumni, including his good friend The Sandman.**

***Quick title changes: Atlantic Championship Wrestling, Upland, PA, October 21:*** **Donn E. Allen** beat **Mark Smart** to win the Internet championship ... **The Hatebreed** (**Ryan Prime** and **Vic Rancid**) defeated **S.U.V.** (**Onslaught** and **Iron Tiger**) to win the urban xtreme tag title ... ***NWA Virginia, Roanoke, VA, October 22:*** **Bad News Johnson** and **Drake Tungsten** defeated **Chris Escobar** and **Frank Parker** to win the tag team title ... ***River City Wrestling, San Antonio, TX, October 22:*** **Kazushi Miyamoto** defeated **Chris Marval** to win the vacant heavyweight title ... ***Northern Wrestling Federation, Fairfield, OH, October 22:*** **TNT** won a tournament to capture the tag team title, beating **Roger Ruffen** and **Muldoon**, **The Hippies**, and **Matt Parks** and **Ryan Stone** ... ***Southern Wrestling Alliance, Huntsville, TN, October 22:*** **Shane Williams** and **Rich Kavana** defeated **Edward Idol** in a handicap match to win the tag team title ... **The Omen** pinned **Eric Adamz** to win the U.S. title ... ***IWA Flashfire, Hartwell, GA, October 22:*** **Nitro** pinned **Tank** to win the Internet title ... ***Ulster Championship Wrestling, Belfast, Northern Ireland, October 22:*** **Takahiro Fujinami** defeated **El Torro Sanchez**, **Joey Vlayze**, and **RODD** to win the cruiserweight title ... **Mick Stupp** beat **Johnny Cage** and **Skot Fury** to win the hardcore title ... ***Texas All-Star Wrestling, Humble, TX, October 22:*** **Dylan Starr** beat **Mr. Mayhem** to win the hardcore title ... ***South Eastern Wrestling Alliance, Wilson, NC, October 22:*** **"Pit Bull" Steven Lock** beat **"Lucky" Leroy Green** for the cruiserweight title ... ***Northwind Championship Wrestling, Charleston, WV, October 28:*** **Terry Alan** and **Maddawg** defeated **Shane Michaels** and **Jason Strong** to win the tag team title ... **Storm** defeated **Tiger Allen** to win the heavyweight title ... ***International Wrestling Syndicate, Montreal, Quebec, October 29:*** **Kid Kamikaze** pinned **Dan Paysan** for the Canadian title ... ***OSCW, Dayton, TN, October 29:*** **Brian Rivers** pinned **Jeff Bowman** to win the heavyweight title ... **Jeff Bowman** and **Casey Kage** defeated **Shane Bradley** and **Robbie Lee Jordan**, **Brian** and **Zack Rivers**, and **The Rocky Top Rocker** and **The Afghanistan Moondog** to win the tag team title ... ***NWA/ECCW, Surrey, BC, October 29:*** **Cremator** defeated **Moondog Manson** to win the hardcore title ... ***NWA Anarchy, Cornelia, GA, October 29:*** **Slim J** pinned **Jeff Lewis** to win the TV title ... ***Independent Wrestling Revolution, Detroit, MI, October 29:*** **Bump 'n' Uglies** (**Josh Movado** and **Bubba MacKenzie**) beat **The Wyld Stallyns** (**Johnny Dynamo** and **Jack Thriller**) to win the tag team title ... **Truth Martini** beat **N8 Mattson**, **Gutter**, **Chris Sabin**, **Eddie Venom**, and **Zach Gowen** in a six-man scramble to win the King of the Indies title ... ***Funkin' Conservatory, Daytona Beach, FL, October 29:*** **Dory Funk Jr.** beat **"Big Bucks" Bank Barfield** and **Great White Butcher** in a three-man tournament to win the TV title ... ***NWA Tri-State, Parkersburg, WV, October 31:*** **Zack Vincent** beat **"Violent" Vance Desmond** to win the 3WA heavyweight title ... ***Ohio Valley Wrestling, Louisville, KY, November 9:*** **C.M. Punk** pinned **Ken Doane** to win the TV title ... **Matt Cappotelli** defeated heavyweight champion **Johnny Jeter** for the championship. □

# the international report

By Mike Spillane

THE POPULARITY OF Lucha Libre in the United States has been on a steady upward swing for the past year. The WB Network's *Mucha Lucha* animated program has introduced Mexico's national form of pro wrestling to a young, English-speaking audience in a way it had never before been represented. This can only be good news for Lucha companies like CMLL and AAA, which air domestically on Galavision each weekend.

Recent syndicated news pieces about the mounting popularity of CMLL daredevil **Mistico** in particular have helped cast an even brighter spotlight on Lucha Libre. Ever-conscious of which demographics are attracted to its programming, WWE recently recruited **Brazo de Plata** (also known as **Super Porky**) and mini-superstars like **Mascarita Sagrada** and **Pierrothito** for the Smackdown brand in an attempt to boost viewership among Hispanic audiences. Super Porky is renowned as one of Lucha's most charismatic performers and has become a much hotter star than any of his four wrestling brothers and numerous other wrestling relatives.

Mascarita Sagrada is arguably the most spectacular mini-Luchador active today, this current version being the third incarnation of the character (the second Mascarita Sagrada worked for WWE under the name **Max Mini**). Just last year, Pierrothito was named Best Mini-Luchador in Mexico by *SuperLuchas* magazine, and since he has spent most of his career with CMLL, this new arrangement with WWE will allow him to face AAA's Mascarita Sagrada for the first time. WWE, of course, also has under contract a variety of other well-known Lucha Libre stars like **Rey Misterio Jr.**, **Psicosis**, **Juventud Guerrera**, **Super Crazy**, **Eddie Guerrero**, and even **Val Venis**, who spent years as a top draw in Mexico under the name **Steele**.

Apart from expanding business opportunities in the United States, CMLL is doing quite well in its home territory of Mexico City. Arena Mexico has enjoyed a record-setting year for attendance, and the popularity of *technicos* like Mistico and **Dr. Wagner Jr.**, as well as hot *rudos* like **Perro Aguayo Jr.** and **Ultimo Guerrero** has kept fans coming back for more every Friday night.

In addition to the weekly TV tapings at Arena Mexico, CMLL also runs Sunday afternoons and Tuesday evening at Arena Coliseos across Mexico. Those Luchadores prominently featured on television have proven to be top draws even in remote towns for sporadic independent events. The overall improvement in business has led to discussion of TV Azteca relaunching its former ENESMA (also called LML) property with a new name, backed by national television exposure for its own stable of colorful characters. In the past, the company had always made use of the biggest name freelance stars available in the country in addition to little-known independent talents in putting together diverse cards.

**Life after WWE isn't bad at all for Kenzo Suzuki. He has commitments lined up on at least three continents and could have an "in" to return to New Japan Pro Wrestling.**

A familiar face is on his way to CMLL in Mexico: recent WWE release **Kenzo Suzuki**. With the expiration of his non-compete clause, Suzuki will be popping up all over the globe, with confirmed appearances not only in Mexico, but in Europe, as well as in Japan for the Hustle promotion. Suzuki originally

trained in New Japan Pro Wrestling and left to join mentor **Riki Choshu** in his short-lived World Japan group that faded away after a few tours. Along with wife **Hiroko**, he spent a year as a member of WWE's Smackdown roster prior to his release, and he will have hit the independent circuit by the time you read this. Choshu's recent return to power with New Japan might also open the door for Suzuki to return there in the future.

Another Japanese star currently appearing in Mexico is **Chuichiro Arai**. This young wrestler, the third in a line of "Arakens" from **Ultimo Dragon's** Toryumon group, has been at work for companies like the AULL and MAXPROAD in the suburbs of Mexico City. The wrestlers nicknamed "Araken" are known for their heads of steel, and both **Kennichiro Arai** and **Koichiro Arai** are known specifically for their headbutts. Chuichiro Arai recently made his U.S. debut as well, wrestling for independent promotions like CHIKARA, NEXT, and XWA during his short stay. Before returning to Mexico, he managed to capture **"Sweet 'n' Sour" Larry Sweeney's** Tex-Arkana TV title, but only held on to it for a day. He is expected to begin touring with Dragon Door in his native Japan in early-2006.

**Masa Chono and Hiroyoshi Tenzan are now five-time ... five-time ... five-time IWGP International tag team champions. They beat a young team that might have been bit a bit weary after a tour of Mexico.**

The IWGP tag team champions briefly toured Mexico with their championship belts in the month of October, and then promptly lost them upon their return to New Japan. **Shinsuke Nakamura** and **Hiroshi Tanahashi** made a big splash on the Lucha scene, defending the gold a handful of times against top Mexican tandems. However, their overseas vacation might not have prepared them for the surprise title match awaiting them in Kobe, Japan, at the end of October. There, the young champions took on four-time former tag team champions **Masa Chono** and **Hiroyoshi Tenzan**. Nakamura and Tanahashi were overwhelmed by the former champs in a losing effort before a vociferous crowd. In addition to this marking the beginning of Chono and Tenzan's fifth tag team title reign together, both have additional reigns to their credit with various other partners.

Chono and Tenzan aren't the only tag team in Japan right now famed for their numerous championship runs. The former **Dudley Boyz**, now called **Team 3D**, have been touring with All-Japan Pro Wrestling—when not busy with TNA commitments—and helping the company win over a new fan base. Since adding sumo star **Akebono** to the roster, All-Japan has slowly started turning around its failing live show business, and Team 3D is the latest act brought in to further bolster attendance. The duo has proven to be a smash success with *puroresu* fans, and talks are already on to confirm their participation in the 29th annual round-robin tag team tournament that has become one of the bigger events on the All-Japan calendar.

The longstanding promotional war between **Carlos Colon's** WWC and **Victor Quinones'** IWA in Puerto Rico has been a back-and-forth affair for years now. In the 1990s, the McMahon family and thus the WWF were aligned with Quinones, who helped bring in talent like **Taka Michinoku** and **Essa "Mr. Aguila" Rios** to the company. However, WWE switched allegiances recently, especially since former Intercontinental champion and current Raw star **Carlito Caribbean Cool** is the son of the legendary WWC owner.

Now it seems the McMahons are keeping one leg on each side of Puerto Rico's promotional fence. In the month of November, Carlito and possibly **The Big Show** were slated to appear with the WWC, while the IWA is being sent talent from the WWE developmental system. While Puerto Rican wrestling is usually best known for its bloodbaths and not its bodybuilder-types, WWE is clearly trying to keep its options open while looking for its next big superstars. With more expansion of the WWE developmental circuit planned for 2006, tryouts are being set up throughout the States, as well as in Mexico City, while agents are being dispatched to Europe and Puerto Rico to scout talent. □

# arena reports

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## Spotlight Card of the Month

**WAYNESBORO, VA**—Ward Family Promotions' "Night Of The Superstars" card to benefit the University of Virginia's Children's Hospital at the High School Gymnasium: **J-Synn** won a six-man elimination match over **Phil Brown**, **Gregory Vercetti**, **Morgan Lander**, **Dr. Stud**, and **Preston Michaels** ... **Short Sleeve Sampson** pinned **Todd Stone** in a midgets match ... **George South** defeated **The Grappler** ... **Mikey Batts** won a triangle match over **Ultra Dragon** and **Sonjay Dutt** ... **The Patriot**, **Tony Atlas**, **Ranger Ross**, & **The Stro** beat **Ivan Koloff**, **Boris Dragoff**, **The Russian Assassin**, and **King Kaluha**. After the match, Kaluha turned against Ivan Koloff. **Nikita Koloff** then rushed to the ring to save Ivan ... **Ivory** wrestled **Jazz** to a no-contest ... **Kip James** pinned **Rodney Mack** ... **Maven** beat **Al Snow** (NASCAR driver **Hermie Sadler** was the guest referee) ... **Dusty Rhodes** was declared the winner in his match against **Bob Orton Jr.** when guest referee **David Flair** attacked Rhodes during the match; Rhodes pinned Flair when **Earl Hebner** ran in and made the three-count ... **Jerry Lawler** pinned **Bill Dundee** (**Jimmy Valiant** was the guest referee). (10-29-05)

*—"Spotlight" photos by Timothy A. Walker*

## UNITED STATES

### CALIFORNIA

**SAN DIEGO**—WWE Taboo Tuesday pay-per-view at the PayOne Center: **Matt Hardy** & **Rey Misterio Jr.** defeated **Chris Masters** & **Gene Snitsky** (substituting for an injured **Edge**) when Misterio pinned Masters ... **Eugene** & **Jimmy Snuka** beat **Rob Conway** & **Tyson Tomko** when Snuka pinned Conway ... **Mankind** defeated **Carlito Caribbean Cool** ... **The Big Show** & **Kane** defeated Raw tag team champions **Lance Cade** & **Trevor Murdoch** to win the title ... World champion **Batista** pinned **Jonathan Coachman** in a streetfight ... Women's champion **Trish Stratus** won a lingerie battle royal ... Intercontinental champion **Ric Flair** defeated **Triple-H** in a steel cage match ... WWE champion **John Cena** defeated **Kurt Angle** and **Shawn Michaels** in a three-way match when he pinned Michaels. (11-01-05)

*—Dan Murphy*

**REDDING**—WWE at the Convention Center: **Bobby Lashley** pinned **Sylvan Grenier** ... **Paul Birchill** & **William Regal** defeated **Paul London** & **Spanky** ... **Ken Doane** defeated **Funaki** ... Cruiserweight champion **Juventud Guerrera** beat **Kid Kash** ... Smackdown tag team champions **Road Warrior Animal** & **Heidenreich** beat **Joey Mercury** & **Johnny Nitro** ... **Matt Hardy** pinned **Christian** ... **Rey Misterio Jr.** beat **John Bradshaw Layfield** ... U.S. champion **Booker T** defeated **Hardcore Holly**, **Chris Benoit**, and **Ken Kennedy** in a four-way match ... World champion **Batista** beat **Randy Orton** and **Eddie Guerrero** in a three-way match. (10-23-05)

*—Timothy Spollen*

**SACRAMENTO**—Supreme Pro Wrestling at St. Peter's Hall: **Dub C** pinned **Deacon Frost** ... **Vinny Massaro** won the annual Halloween gimmick battle royal ... The bright unbelievable totally terrific champ **Seito Hayashi** pinned **Kassy** ... **The Suburban Commandos** beat **Tarantula**, **Sonny Sampson**, & **Diablo** ... **Pogo the Clown**, **Brian Raymond**, **Luster the Legend**, & **Trent Hemridge** beat **Oliver John**, **Adam Thornstowe**, **Rik Luxury**, & **Steel** in an elimination match ... **J.D. Bishop** & **Vinny Massaro** beat **Vic Grimes** & **Dante** ... **Los Despedidos** beat **El Hijo De Chupacabra** & **Chupacabra II** ... Extreme champ **Bonzai Bruce** beat **Sir Samurai** and **Mike Rayne** in a three-way match ... **Shane Dynasty** beat **El Flaco Loco** in a casket match. (10-23-05)

*—Tim Moura*

**BAKERSFIELD**—WWE at the Rabobank Arena: **Psicosis** & **Super Crazy** defeated **Paul Birchill** & **William Regal** ... **Bobby Lashley** pinned **Sylvan Grenier** ... Cruiserweight champion **Juventud Guerrera** defeated **Nunzio** ... **Road Warrior Animal**, **Heidenreich**, & **Christy Hemme** defeated **Joey Mercury**, **Johnny Nitro**, & **Melina** ... **Hardcore Holly** beat **Christian** ... **Rey Misterio Jr.** pinned **John Bradshaw Layfield** ... U.S. champion **Chris Benoit** defeated **Ken Kennedy** by disqualification ... World champion **Juventud Guerrera** defeated **Nunzio** ... **Road Warrior Animal**, **Heidenreich**, & **Christy Hemme** defeated **Joey Mercury**, **Johnny Nitro**, & **Melina** ... **Hardcore Holly** beat **Christian** ... **Rey Misterio Jr.** pinned **John Bradshaw Layfield** ... U.S. champion **Chris Benoit** defeated **Ken Kennedy** by disqualification ... World

**Almost 35 years after he upset Bruno Sammartino for the WWF title, Ivan Koloff is still going ... well, he's still going. He handled The Stro here, but he needed help from his once-famous nephew after his team lost an eight-man tag.**

champion **Batista** beat **Eddie Guerrero** and **Randy Orton** in a three-way match.
(10-16-05)

*—Frank Krewda*

**SAN JOSE**—WWE at the HP Pavilion: **Chris Masters** defeated **Tajiri** ... **Shelton Benjamin** beat **Kerwin White** by disqualification ... **Shelton Benjamin** & **Matt Striker** beat **Kerwin White** & **Nick Nemeth** ... **Rob Conway** pinned **Eugene** ... **The Big Show** pinned **Edge** ... **Ashley Massaro** & **Trish Stratus** beat **Torrie Wilson** & **Victoria** ... Intercontinental champion **Ric Flair** defeated **Carlito Caribbean Cool** ... WWE champion **John Cena** pinned **Kurt Angle**.
(10-16-05)

*—Kyle Rayfield*

**SAN BERNARDINO**—WWE at the Coussoulis Arena: **Kane** pinned **Tyson Tomko** ... **Shelton Benjamin** pinned **Kerwin White** ... **Rob Conway** pinned **Eugene** ... Raw tag team champions **Lance Cade** & **Trevor Murdoch** defeated **Val Venis** & **Viscera** ... **The Big Show** pinned **Edge** ... **Ashley Massaro** & **Trish Stratus** beat **Torrie Wilson** & **Victoria** ... **Chris Masters** defeated **Tajiri** ... Intercontinental champion **Ric Flair** beat **Carlito Caribbean Cool** ... WWE champion **John Cena** pinned **Kurt Angle** in a no-disqualification match.
(10-14-05)

*—Jack Freed*

## CONNECTICUT

**WOODBRIDGE**—Ring of Honor at the Connecticut Sports Center: **Claudio Castagnoli** and **Alex Shelly** wrestled to a 20-minute draw ... **Azriael** & **Davey Andrews** beat **Jason Blade** & **Kid Mikaze** ... **Ricky Reyes** defeated **Mitch Franklin** ... **B.J. Whitmer** defeated **Nigel McGuinness, Kikutaro,** & **Nosawa** in a four corners of survival match ... **A.J. Styles** defeated **Austin Aries** ... **Colt Cabana** defeated **B-Boy** ... **Jay Lethal** defeated **Curry Man** ... ROH champion **Bryan Danielson** defeated **Roderick Strong**.
(10-29-05)

*—Jim Lee*

## FLORIDA

**ORLANDO**—TNA Bound For Glory pay-per-view at Universal Studios: **Samoa Joe** defeated **Jushin Liger** ... **Simon Diamond, Elix Skipper,** & **David Young** beat **Apolo, Shark Boy,** & **Sonny Siaki** ... **Monty Brown** pinned **Lance Hoyt** ... **A-1, Bobby Roode,** & **Eric Young** beat **B.G. James, Ron Killings,** & **Konnan** ... **Petey Williams** defeated **Matt Bentley** and **Chris Sabin** in a three-way "Ultimate X" match ... NWA tag team champions **Chris Harris** & **James Storm** defeated **Andy Douglas** & **Chase Stevens** ... **Rhino** beat **Sabu, Jeff Hardy,** and **Abyss** in a "Monsters' Ball" match when Rhino pinned Hardy ... TNA X champion **A.J. Styles** defeated **Christopher Daniels** in a 30-minute "Ironman" match, one fall to none ... **Rhino** won a 10-man battle royal to earn a shot at the NWA title, last eliminating **Abyss** ... **Rhino** (substituting for **Kevin Nash**, who had to be hospitalized a day earlier) pinned NWA heavyweight champion **Jeff Jarrett** to win the title.
(10-23-05)

*—Bill Meltzer*

## GEORGIA

**DUBLIN**—GIWA at the Ag Center: **The Professor** beat **Jarrod Lister** ... **Matt Black** beat **Bobby Joiner** ... Ironman champion **Shawn Hunter** beat mid-state champion **Sean Logan** to win the title ... **Big Daddy Osborne** beat **Loco Motive** ... **Velvet Jones** beat **Tommy 2 Much** ... **Mike Stratus** beat **The Freak** ... Tag team champions **The Outlaws** beat **Oko Nono** & **The Professor**.
(10-29-05)

*—Theo Simms*

**McDONOUGH**—Deep South Wrestling at the DSW Arena: **Ryan Reeves** beat **Palmer Canon** by disqualification ... **Mac Johnson** pinned **Kenny Omega** ... **Eric Perez** beat **Lash LeRoux** ... **Ray Gordy** beat **John Slaughter** ... **Mike Knox** defeated **Tony Santorelli** ... **Johnny Parisi** pinned **Damien Steele.** ... **Ryan O'Reilly** beat **Joe Slaughter** by countout ... **The Miz** beat **Kid Kash** ... **Mike Taylor** beat **Derrick Neikirk**.
(10-29-05)

*—Larry Goodman*

**CORNELIA**—NWA Anarchy at the NWA Arena: **Kory Chavis, Jay Fury,** & **Hayden Young** beat **Three Guys That Totally Rule** ... **Jeremy V** & **Jason Blackman** defeated **Cru Jones** & **Ken Westbrooks, Pomp** & **Circumstance,** and **The Texas Treats** ... **Gabriel** beat **Todd Sexton** ... **Brandon P** beat **Azrael** ... **Slim J** pinned **Jeff Lewis** to win the TV title ... **Heath Miller** & **Randall Johnson** beat **Skitzo** & **Brett Thunder** ... Heavyweight champion **Mikal Adryan** beat **Onyx** ... **Urban Assault Squad** beat **Alabama Attitude** in a noose match.
(10-28-05)

*—Larry Goodman*

**HARTWELL**—IWA Flashfire at the National Guard Armory: **Tommy Sawyer** wrestled **Crash Hollywood** to a no-contest ... **Masked Man X** pinned **Draco** ... **Xion the Heretic** & **Lance Christopher** wrestled to a double-disqualification ... **The Corpse** defeated TV champ **Infamous D** by disqualification ... **Nitro** pinned **Tank** to win the Internet title ... **Billy Starr, Panhead Nelson,** & **Tommy Sawyer** defeated **Crash Hollywood** & tag team champs **The Force Foundation** ... IWA Flashfire heavyweight champ **Don Matthews** pinned FWF heavyweight champ **Leatherface** (the FWF title wasn't on the line).
(10-22-05)

*—Brad Bates*

## HAWAII

**HONOLULU**—WWE at the Blaisdell Arena: **Kane** beat **Tyson Tomko** ... Raw tag team champions **Lance Cade** & **Trevor Murdoch** beat **Val Venis** & **Viscera** ... **Chris Masters** beat **Tajiri** ... **Shelton Benjamin** pinned **Kerwin White** ... **Rob Conway** pinned **Eugene** ... **The Big Show** pinned **Edge** ... **Ashley Massaro** & **Trish Stratus** beat **Torrie Wilson** & **Victoria** ... Intercontinental champion **Ric Flair** beat **Carlito Caribbean Cool** ... WWE champion **John Cena** defeated **Kurt Angle**.
(10-15-05)

*—Thomas Franklin Jr.*

**Haven't we seen these two have at it somewhere before? Jazz and Ivory, two of the toughest women's champs in WWE history, still looked like they could be key players in that division.**

## INDIANA

**MADISON**—AWA Supreme Championship Wrestling at the SCW Building: **Live Wire** pinned **Eric Draven** in a loser-leaves-town match ... **American Super Star** beat **Maliki** in a loser-wears-a-dress match ... **The Prophet** beat **Chris Morrus** by disqualification ... **Jamie Morrison** beat **Damien Divine** ... **Kappa Tappa Kegga** defeated **J.V. Insanity** and **T-Dogg** in a triple threat match ... **K-Lo** pinned **Dez** ... **The Marksmen** beat **J.T. Stone** & **Justen Lightweight** ... **O'Dell Enterprises** beat **The Billion-Dollar Connection** in a streetfight ... Supreme heavyweight champion **Billy Maverick** pinned **Chris Blayze**.
(10-22-05)

*—Shawn Sands*

## LOUISIANA

**ABBYVILLE**—Dirty South Championship Wrestling at the American Legion Hall: **Jordan Espinoza** beat **Mexican Giant** ... **T.K. Riot** beat **Rhettro** ... **Jeremy Young** pinned **Scott Murdoch** ... **Alvin Breaux** beat **The Angel of SIN** ... **Rodney Mack** beat **Cotton Eye Joe** ... **Rodney Mack** beat **The Mexican Giant** ... **The Pipeline Express** beat **Double Trouble** ... **Jazz** pinned **Sassy Vegas**.
(10-22-05)

*—Larry Johnson*

## MASSACHUSETTS

**ATTLEBORO**—Millennium Wrestling Federation/AWA New England at the Moose Lodge: **Danny Jaxxz** beat **Jon Thornhill** ... **Pierre** & **Damian Vachon** defeated **Paulie Gilmore** in a handicap match ... **Gary Gold** beat **Cris Blackheart** ... AWA brass knuckles champion **Gino Martino** defeated

**Who knew Kip James packed such a mighty punch! A quick right cross had Rodney Mack rockin' and reelin'. It propelled Kip to a victory.**

**The Outpatient** in a falls-count-anywhere match ... Tag team champions **Beau Douglas** & **Todd Hansen** defeated **The Canadian Sensations** ... **Trifecta** beat **Southern Extreme** ... **Osirus** beat **Jay Busta**.
(10-22-05)

*—John Philips*

## MICHIGAN

**DETROIT**—Independent Wrestling Revolution at the Majestic Theater: **The Threat** won a tag team battle royal ... **Mascarita Sagrada** beat **Tsuki** in a minis match ... **The Bump 'n' Uglies** beat tag team champions **The Wyld Stallyns** in a title vs. masks match to win the belts ... **Shark Boy** beat **Super Parka** in a best-of-three-falls match ... **Truth Martini** beat **N8 Mattson**, **Gutter**, **Chris Sabin**, **Eddie Venom**, and IWR King of the Indies champion **Zach Gowen** in a six-man scramble to win the King of the Indies title ... Heavyweight champion **Conrad Kennedy III** beat **The Blue Panther** to retain the title ... **L.A. Park** beat **El Hijo del Santo** in a steel cage match.
(10-29-05)

*—Brett Wolverton*

## MISSISSIPPI

**MAGEE**—NWA Battlezone at the Battlezone Arena: **Captain Sparkle** wrestled **The Enhancement Kid** to a time-limit draw ... **Monty Warbucks** beat **Hank Frazier** ... **Southern Executioner** beat **Rick Morgan** ... **Ron Horn** beat **Rondale Roosevelt** ... **The Faroh of Phunk** beat **Calvin Rose** by disqualification ... **The Southern Executioner**, **The Faroh of Phunk**, & **Mike Carter** beat **The All Night Express** & **Rick Morgan**.
(10-22-05)

*—Joseph Williamson*

## NEW JERSEY

**ATLANTIC CITY**—Jersey All Pro Wrestling at Bally's Casino: **E.C. Negro** beat **Beef Wellington** ... **Frankie Kazarian** beat **Xavier** ... **Harry Smith** beat **Kevin Steen** ... **New Jack** beat **The Sandman** and **Danny Demanto** in a three-way match ... Heavyweight champion **Jay Lethal** beat **Steve Corino** in a dog collar match ... **Azrieal** beat **El Generico**, **Archadia**, and **M-Dogg 20** in the "Best Of The Light Heavyweights 8" ... **April Hunter** & **Talia** beat **Alicia** & **Krissy Vaine** ... **Homicide** & **Teddy Hart** won the tag team title in a TLC match by defeating **The Briscoe Brothers**, **The S.A.T.**, and **The Backseat Boyz**.
(10-22-05)

*—Leah Novak*

**EAST WINDSOR**—National Wrestling Superstars at K & S Farms Field of Terror: **Tony Flow** beat **Mahoney** ... **Mike Reed** beat **TNT** and **Goal-Duh** in a three-way dance ... **Hasheem Ali** beat **Fred Sampson** ... **Kaibutzu** beat **Mike Reed** & **Saddam Insane** ... **Mahoney** & **Fred Samson** beat **Tony Flow** & **Hasheem Ali** in a tables match.
(10-22-05)

*—Kevin Redding*

**WEST PATERSON**—IWF at the IWF Arena: **Nick Sabre** beat **Jasin Karloff** and **Robby Morrison** in a triple threat match ... American champion **Shane O'Brien** pinned **Sean Royal** ... **Shawn Donavan** & **Travis Blake** beat tag team champions **Aaron Stride** & **Biggie Biggs** to capture the title ... **Justin Corino** & **Francis** beat **Tony Torres** & **Antonio Rivera** ... **Kevin Knight** beat heavyweight champion **Damian Adams** to capture the title.
(10-22-05)

*—Dorothy Podsvirow*

## NEW MEXICO

**ALBUQUERQUE**—WWE at The Pit: WWE champion **John Cena** pinned **Kurt Angle** ... **The Big Show** pinned **Gene Snitsky** ... **Rey Misterio Jr.** pinned **John Bradshaw Layfield** ... Intercontinental champion **Ric Flair** beat **Carlito Caribbean Cool** ... **Kane** won a 10-man Raw vs. Smackdown battle royal, last eliminating **Bobby Lashley** ... U.S. champion **Booker T** pinned **Chris Benoit** ... **Ashley Massaro**, **Christy Hemme**, & **Trish Stratus** defeated **Victoria**, **Torrie Wilson**, & **Melina** ... World champion **Batista** defeated **Eddie Guerrero** and **Randy Orton** in a three-way match.
(10-21-05)

*—Albert Rinaldi*

## NORTH CAROLINA

**HAMLET**—World Class Extreme Wrestling at the National Guard Armory: **Ace Crusader** defeated **Chris Solar** ... **PITT** & **Sin 'N' Tonic** defeated **Slick** & **Kendra** ... **Joe Kool** defeated **Johnny Lightning** ... **ECBH** wrestled **Tyrone Knox** & **Ali Steele** to a double-disqualification ... Heavyweight champion **DJ P-Roc** defeated **Robert Sheryl** ... **Aaron Devil** defeated **Justin Feeche** in a no-rope, barbed-wire match.
(10-29-05)

*—Jeanne Patton*

**MOORESVILLE**—Exodus Wrestling Alliance at the National Guard Armory: **Rob Guerrero** defeated **Canadian Bulldog** ... **Jake Manning** defeated **Ethan Cage** ... **Jason Jones** wrestled **Jason King** to a no-contest ... **George South Sr.** defeated **Chris Guerrero**.
(10-27-05)

*—Michael Carpenter*

**WILSON**—South Eastern Wrestling Alliance at the Convention Center: **Dogg** defeated **The Fanatic** ... **Johnny Lightning** defeated **Iron Chief** ... **The Drive Brothers** wrestled **Aaron Devil** & **DJ P-Roc** to a double-countout ... **Steven Lock** defeated **Leroy Green** for the cruiserweight title ... **The Bounty Hunter** pinned **Tyrone Knox** ... **Nemimis** defeated **Louis Moore** in a grudge match.
(10-22-05)

*—Jeff Patton*

## OHIO

**CINCINNATI**—Northern Wrestling Federation at the Bonekrushers Training Center: **American Eagle** beat **Dr. Melvin Winkleman** ... Bonekrushers champion **Muldoon** defeated **Dustin Lillard** ... **Russ Meyers** beat **Jeremy Hyde** ... **Pompano Joe** defeated **Austin Meddler** ... **T-Money** defeated **Jesse Hyde** ... Tri-state champion **Ryan Stone** defeated **Tony Bryant** ... **Roger Ruffen** beat **Tiny Tim** ... **Matt Parks** & heavyweight champion **Chad Allegra** beat **Ice** & lightweight champion **The Zodiac**.
(10-29-05)

*—Thomas Fisher*

**ELYRIA**—Mega Championship Wrestling at Lorain County Community College: **The Bouncer** defeated **Judge Krush** ... **Vincent Nothing** defeated **Chris Kole** ... **Traz** defeated **Brandon X** ... Brass knuckles champ **Chuck Brody** defeated **Christian Faith** in a trick-or-treat match ... **Nick Tatum** defeated **Johnny Beef** ... **Carlton Kaz** & **Jabari** defeated **Da Munchies** ... Light heavyweight champion **Nick Ritters** defeated **Dublabe**, **Aero**, and **Shawn Blaze** in a four-way match... U.S. champ **J.T. Lightning** defeated **Glenn Spectre**.
(10-22-05)

*—Adam Alter*

**FAIRFIELD**—Northern Wrestling Federation at the UAW Hall: ***In a tournament to fill the vacant tag team title, quarterfinals*: Dustin Lillard** & **American Eagle** defeated **The Thugs** ... **The Hippies** defeated **Weird Science** ... **Matt Parks** & **Ryan Stone** defeated **The Zodiacs** ... **T-N-T** defeated **Muldoon** & **Roger Ruffen** ... ***Semifinals:* Parks** & **Stone** defeated **Eagle** & **Lillard** ... **T-N-T** defeated **The Hippies** ... ***Finals:* T-N-T** defeated **Parks** & **Stone** to win the vacant title ... ***Non-tournament match:*** Heavyweight champion **Chad Allegra** and HWA champion **Cody Hawk** wrestled to a no-contest when the referee stopped the match due to excessive bleeding by both wrestlers.
(10-22-05)

*—Thomas Fisher*

## PENNSYLVANIA

**McKEESPORT**—International Wrestling Cartel at the Palisades: **Jason Gory** pinned **Larry Sweeney** ... **Shiima Xion** beat **Troy Lords** ... Super Indy champion **John McChesney** beat **Shannon Moore** ... **Jimmy Demarco** beat **J-Rocc** ... **Mickey** & **Marshall Gambino** beat **Tracey Smothers** & **Spyder Nate Webb** ... **Chris Hero** pinned **Eddie Kingston** ... **Jason Cage** beat **Bubba the Bulldog** by disqualification ... **Sebastian Dark** & **Hentai** beat **Dean Radford** & **The Sandman** ... Heavyweight champion **Shirley Doe** beat **Sterling Keenan**.
(10-29-05)

*—Joe Dombrowski*

**McKEESPORT**—NWA Pro Wrestling Express at the Sportatorium: Three Rivers champion **Eric Extasy** pinned **Eisen Drache** ... **Teddy Fine** & **Sabotage** defeated **Armageddon** ... **Daron Smythe** pinned **Paul Atlas** ... **Sam Slej** pinned **Mantis** ... **Chris Taylor** & **Devin Devine** defeated **Quinn Magnum** by disqualification in a handicap match ... **Mad Mike** defeated **Scott Venom** ... **Bigg** & **Nikita Allanov** defeated **Da Munchies** by disqualification ... Heavyweight champion **Scottie Gash** defeated **Crusher Hansen** in a TLC match ... **Justin Idol** pinned **Chris Taylor**.
(10-29-05)

*—Tony Brooks*

**PHILADELPHIA**—Pro Wrestling Underground at the L & J Banquet Hall: **Z-Barr** beat **Drew Blood** ... **Pete Hunter** & **Detox** beat **Korpse** & **Big Daddy Bell** ... **Trent Acid** beat **The Sandman** ... **The N.J. All-Stars** beat **Din Mak** & **Bomboy** ... Unified women's champion **Sumie Sakai** beat **Luscious Lily** ... **Nick Berk** beat **K.J. Hellfire** and **Aramis** in a three-way dance ... **Trent Acid** beat **Devon Moore** ... **Jerk Jackson** beat **Mahoney**.
(10-29-05)

*—Bart Beck*

**ALLENTOWN**—World Xtreme Wrestling's fourth annual Women's Elite 8 Tournament: ***Quarterfinals:*** **Alicia** pinned **Ariel** ... **Phoenix** pinned **Nikki Roxx** ... **Cindy Rogers** beat **Allison Danger** by submission ... **Melissa Coates** beat **21st Century Fox** by submission ... ***Semifinals:*** **Alicia** pinned **Phoenix** ... **Cindy Rogers** pinned **Melissa Coates** ... ***Finals:*** **Alicia** pinned **Cindy Rogers** to win the tournament ... ***Non-tournament match:*** Women's champion **Mercedes Martinez** defeated **Talia** and **Krissy Vaine**.
(10-23-05)

*—Eric Shaffer*

**UPLAND**—Atlantic Championship Pro Wrestling at The Underground: Junior heavyweight champ **Chris Wylde** defeated **Sabian** ... **Devon Moore**, **Drew Blood**, & **Detox** defeated **Angus the Caveman**, **Aramis**, & **K.J. Hellfire** ... **Teddy Fine** defeated **Zac Conner** by submission ... Tag team champions **The Gemini Trojans** defeated **Living Dead** ... **Kwami** defeated **Ron Starr** ... **Gemini** defeated **DJ** ... **Donn E. Allen** defeated **Mark Smart** to win the Internet title ... TV champ **Kris Krude** defeated **Eric Chapel** ... **The Hatebreed** defeated **S.U.V.** to win the urban x-treme tag team title ... **Dr. Ruthless** defeated **Patch** in a first-blood match ... Heavyweight champion **Greg Spitz** defeated **The Maverick**.
(10-21-05)

*—Tina Buchanan*

## SOUTH CAROLINA

**LANCASTER**—New Generation Championship Wrestling at the American Legion Building: **Tiny Terrific** beat **Super Ninja** ... **Rex Rumble** defeated **Kid Chaos** ... **Texas Ranger** beat **Sir Jonathan Buffett** ... **Chris Hamrick** defeated **Sonny Landell** ... **George South Jr.** won three-way elimination match over **Jason Jones** and **Mikal Adryan** ... **Bobby Eaton** & **Brad Thomas** defeated **Original Thunderfoots I** & **II** ... **Shane Austin** & **Ring Lord Speedy** beat **Andy Chavis** & **Tim Hunter**.
(10-28-05)

*—Cindy Barry*

## TENNESSEE

**COLUMBIA**—Columbia Wrestling Alliance at Grand Slam USA: **Gypsy Joe** pinned **Tommy Capone** ... **Shane Morton** defeated **Big Country** ... **Johnny Gilbert** beat **Backwoods Brawler** ... Tag team champions **Chris Oliver** & **Richard Ezell** beat **Scotty McKeever** & **Big Dan Richardson** ... **Forsaken** defeated **Shane Morton** ... Heavyweight champ **Buzz Dupp** beat **The Assassin** ... **Southern Justice** defeated **Tim Renesto** & **The Sharp Dressed Man Lawrence**.
(10-29-05)

*—Lekisha F. Oliver*

**HUMBOLDT**—NWA Mid-South Wrestling at the Depot: **Blackbird Jazz** beat NWA Southern junior heavyweight champion **The Golden Boy** by disqualification ... **Mike Woods** pinned **Buzz Dupp** ... **Blackbird Ice** defeated **Big Nasty Bill** ... **Moondog Rover** wrestled **Mike Woods** to a no-contest in a match for the vacant heavyweight title ... **The Blackbirds** defeated tag team champions **Ricky Murdock** & **Big Nasty Bill** in a non-title match.
(10-28-05)

*—Alvin Minnick*

**DAYTON**—OSCW at the Dayton National Guard Armory: **Shane Bradley** wrestled **Robbie Lee Jorday** to a no-contest ... **Paul Dryver** defeated **Justin Racer** by disqualification ... **Brandon Daniels** & **Underlord** beat **Johnny Rokk** in a handicap match ... **Johnny Rokk** beat **Brandon Daniels** in a ladder match ... **Brandon Daniels** beat **Johnny Rokk** in a last-man-standing match ... **Zack Crew** beat **Pyro** in a casket match ... **Brian Rivers** pinned **Jeff Bowman** to become the new heavyweight champion ... A table match between **Ray Cross** and **T.J. Smith** ended in a double-countout ... **Jeff Bowman** & **Casey Kage** defeated **Shane Bradley** & **Robbie Lee Jordan**, **Brian Rivers** & **Zack Rivers**, and **The Rocky Top Rocker** & **The Afghanistian Moondog** to become the new tag team champions.
(10-22-05)

*—Michael Knox*

**HUNTSVILLE**—Southern Wrestling Alliance at the Scott High School: **J.C. Chambers** pinned **J.J. Jackson** ... **Rage** pinned **J.B. Evans** ... **Keith Michaels** pinned **Bert Angle** ... **Josh the Krazed One** pinned **Cpl. Dillanger** ... **Wild Willy D** pinned **Da Studd** ... **Shane Williams** & **Rich Kavana** defeated **Edward Idol** in a handicap match to win the tag team title ... **The Omen** pinned U.S. champion **Eric Adamz** to win the title.
(10-22-05)

*—Paul Ledbetter*

**LAFAYETTE**—Southern Wrestling Association at the National Guard Armory: Light heavyweight champion **Anthony Wayne** defeated U.S. champion **Damien Payne** ... **Jason Nezmith** beat **Phillip Barnard** by disqualification ... **El Hondro Del Negro** beat **Damien Payne** ... **Loose Cannon** beat **Tim Scruggs** in an "I quit" match ... **American Psycho** & **Tony Grande** defeated **Anthony Wayne** (substituting for **Blade**) & **John Watts** ... Heavyweight champion **Matt Korbaine** beat **Chris Havoc** by disqualification.
(10-15-05)

*—Tony Burdine*

## TEXAS

**DENTON**—Xtreme Championship Wrestling at the XCW Arena: **Jack Drastic** & **Spudz** wrestled **Bull** & **Lance Romance** to a no-contest ... **Action Jackson** pinned **Iceman King Parsons** ... **Eddie Atlas** beat **Brett Barnes** in a kendo stick match ...

**Haven't we seen *these two* have at it somewhere before? It looks like Maven is trying to remember what Al Snow taught him about counters for the hammerlock.**

**Bob Orton Jr. couldn't believe he was being admonished by that young whippersnapper of a guest ref, David Flair. Dusty Rhodes would rally to win this match ... by pinning *Flair.***

**Al Jackson** beat **Larry Conyunga** by disqualification ... **Hugh Rogue** beat **Drunk Adam** ... **Jeff** & **Jerry Brown** and **Black By Popular Demand** wrestled to a double-disqualification.
(10-28-05)

*—Scott Phoenix*

**ARLINGTON**—Professional Championship Wrestling at the PCW Arena: **Gabe Roach** beat **Young Pioneer Eagle** ... **Luke Bronson** beat **Jeff Brown** ... **Kevin Paine** beat **Jeremy Young** ... **Jerry Brown** beat **Nobe Bryant** in a strap match ... **Robert Evans** & **Stephen Murphy** beat **Mace Malone** & **Adrian Sensation** in a jailbreak match ... **The Great Kazushi** beat **Wally Darkmon**.
(10-22-05)

*—Rob Moore*

**HUMBLE**—Texas All-Star Wrestling at the Bingo Hall: **Justin Blaze** beat **Humongous** ... **Nate Slater** defeated **Dylan Starr** ... **Nick Daniels** pinned **Scoby Gober** ... **Dylan Starr** beat hardcore champion **Mr. Mayhem** to become the new champion ... **ZenZen** vs. **Bobby 2 Badd** ended in a double-disqualification ... Heavyweight champ **VooDoo** beat **Mr. Mayhem**.
(10-22-05)

*—David Borger*

**MINERAL WELLS**—CWP at the PPCLA Expo Building: **Scott Von Esper** & **Jason Black** defeated **Poison Angel I & II** ... **Seth Shai** defeated **The Mercenary** ... **Mace** defeated **Tejano Kid** ... Southern champ **Kyzer Douglas** defeated **B.A. Dalton** ... Hardcore champ **Slash** wrestled **Sensei** to a time-limit draw.
(10-22-05)

*—Jo Webb*

## UTAH

**SALT LAKE CITY**—WWE at the E Center: **Rey Misterio Jr.** pinned **John Bradshaw Layfield** ... **The Big Show** pinned **Gene Snitsky** ... **Ric Flair** beat **Carlito Caribbean Cool** by submission ... **Kane** won an 11-man Raw vs. Smackdown battle royal ... U.S. champion **Booker T** pinned **Chris Benoit** ... World champion **Batista** defeated **Randy Orton** and **Eddie Guerrero** in a three-way match ... **Trish Stratus**, **Christy Hemme**, & **Ashley Massaro** beat **Torrie Wilson**, **Victoria**, & **Melina** (**Candice Michelle** was the guest referee) ... WWE champion **John Cena** pinned **Kurt Angle** in a no-disqualification match.
(10-22-05)

*—Aaron Saunders*

## VIRGINIA

**ROANOKE**—NWA Virginia at Star City Skate Center: **Matty Dee** defeated **Donnie Dollars** ... **Underground** beat **Bruiser Graham** & **Buddy Love** ... **Mike Vaughn** and **Chris Dramen** wrestled to a time-limit draw ... **Elements of Destruction** beat **Maxx Dynamite** & **Big Tony** ... **Billy Gibbs** & **Beef** beat **The Streetsweepers** ... **Rebecca Knox** won a three-way match over **Lexie Fyfe** and **Kiley McLean** ... NWA-UK British commonwealth champion **Fergall DeVitt** pinned **Brandon Day** ... **Bad News Johnson** & **Drake Tungsten** beat North American tag team champs **Chris Escobar** & **Frank Parker** to win the title ... **Damian Wayne** beat Virginia state champion **Scotty Blaze** to win the title.
(10-22-05)

*—Gloria Blankley*

## WEST VIRGINIA

**CHARLESTON**—Northwind Championship Wrestling at The Fun Park: **Firewalker** defeated **Mike Day** ... **James Jackson** defeated **Bobby Bass** ... **Sweet Daddy Cain** wrestled **David Showers** to a double-countout ... **Terry Alan** & **Maddawg** defeated **Shane Michaels** & **Jason Strong** to win the tag team title ... **Mr. U.S.A.** defeated **Todd Rotten** ... **Storm** defeated **Tiger Allen** to win the heavyweight title.
(10-28-05)

*—Mona Richardson*

# INTERNATIONAL

## AUSTRALIA

**MELBOURNE**—WWE at Rod Laver Arena: **Shelton Benjamin** defeated **Rob Conway** ... Raw tag team champions **Lance Cade** & **Trevor Murdoch** beat **Val Venis** & **Viscera** ... Women's champion **Trish Stratus** pinned **Torrie Wilson** ... **Gene Snitsky** pinned **Tajiri** ... **The Big Show** & **Shawn Michaels** defeated **Chris Masters** & **Carlito Caribbean Cool** ... **Kerwin White** defeated **Eugene** ... **Triple-H** pinned Intercontinental champion **Ric Flair** in a steel cage match ... WWE champion **John Cena** beat **Kurt Angle** in a streetfight.
(10-29-05)

*—Matt Brock*

**ADELAIDE**—WWE at the Entertainment Centre: **Shelton Benjamin** pinned **Gene Snitsky** ... **Kerwin White** defeated **Tajiri** ... **Trish Stratus** & **Ashley Massaro** beat **Torrie Wilson** & **Victoria** ... **Rob Conway** defeated **Eugene** ... **Ric Flair** & **Shawn Michaels** beat **Kurt Angle** & **Carlito Caribbean Cool** ... **The Big Show** beat **Chris Masters** ... Raw tag team champions **Lance Cade** & **Trevor Murdoch** defeated **Val Venis** & **Viscera** ... WWE champion **John Cena** pinned **Triple-H**.
(10-28-05)

*—Dominick Valenti*

**SYDNEY**—WWE at the SuperDome: **The Big Show** beat **Gene Snitsky** ... **Carlito Caribbean Cool** pinned **Eugene** ... **Shelton Benjamin** beat **Kerwin White** ... **Rob Conway** defeated **Tajiri** ... Women's champion **Trish Stratus** defeated **Torrie Wilson** ... **Shawn Michaels** pinned **Chris Masters** ... Raw tag team champions **Lance Cade** & **Trevor Murdoch** defeated **Val Venis** & **Viscera** ... **Triple-H** pinned Intercontinental champion **Ric Flair** in a non-title match ... WWE champion **John Cena** pinned **Kurt Angle**.
(10-27-05)

*—Jason Conlan*

## CANADA

**DARTMOUTH, NOVA SCOTIA**—Mainstream Wrestling at Slam Central: ***In a tournament to for a shot at the heavyweight title, semifinals:*** **Dice** defeated **Maritime Menace** ... **Q8 Casanova** beat **Kyle Kruze** ... ***Finals:*** **Dice** pinned **Q8 Casanova** to win the tournament ... Heavyweight champion **C.N. Power** defeated **Dice** by countout.
(10-30-05)

*—Malcolm Brown*

## NORTHERN IRELAND

**BELFAST**—Ulster Championship Wrestling at Wellington Park Hotel: **Takahiro Fujinami** beat **El Torro Sanchez** ... Cruiserweight champion **Joey Blayze** beat **RODD** ... **Mick Stupp** beat hardcore champion **Johnny Cage** and **Skot Fury** in a three-way match to win the title ... **Tron** won a Royal Rumble-style battle royal ... **Dunkan Disorderly** beat **Vice** ... **JDP** beat **Bobby Lee Harm** in a casket match ... Heavyweight champion **The Machine** beat **Frankie Fever**.
(10-22-05)

*—Alan Anderson*

# 2 MAGAZINES IN 1!
## THE WRESTLER/INSIDE WRESTLING

**Okay, it was an experiment. We took a gamble. Nobody had ever thought of binding two magazines, back cover to back cover, and selling them as one package. It wouldn't have worked with most magazines, but *The Wrestler* and *Inside Wrestling* have been so closely associated for the last 40 years, we thought it just might work. Well, it did! Reader response has been overwhelmingly positive. So if you missed the 164-page combination issues we've published so far, here's a chance to order them.**

### Vol. 1, 2004:

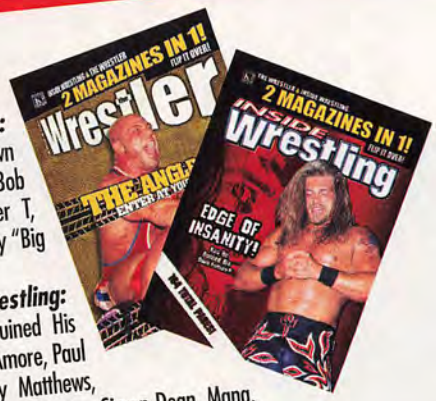
**Cover Story—*The Wrestler:*** "The Billion-Dollar Reason Triple-H Was Traded Back To Raw!" **60-Minute Interview:** Rick Steamboat. **Also Inside:** Trish-Christian, Ring of Honor, Raw vs. Smackdown, Super 8.

**Cover Story—*Inside Wrestling:*** "The Dead Man's Last Will: What The Undertaker Must Do Before He Deep-Sixes His Career." **Also Inside:** Paul Heyman, Orton-Foley, Jackie-Rico, Johnny Nitro, Sylvester Terkay, Jillian Hall, Akio & Sakoda, Garrison Cade, Matt Cappotelli, the Bashams, Sonny Siaki, Sonjay Dutt.

### Vol. 2, 2005:

**Cover Story—*The Wrestler:*** "The Angle Zone: Enter At Your Own Risk!" **60-Minute Interview:** Bob Orton Jr. **Also Inside:** Booker T, Michaels-Christian, A.J. Styles, Ray "Big Bossman" Traylor.

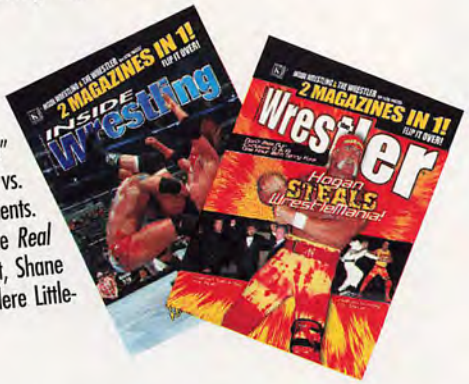
**Cover Story—*Inside Wrestling:*** "Edge Of Insanity! Has He Ruined His Future?" **Also Inside:** Scott D'Amore, Paul London, Orlando Jordan, Joey Matthews, Kim Neilson, Kenny Bolin, Dunn & Marcos, Simon Dean, Mana, Kane-Snitsky, Magnus & Daivari, Pat Kenney.




### Vol. 3, 2005:

**Cover Story—*The Wrestler:*** "Hogan Steals WrestleMania!" **60-Minute Interview:** Terry Funk. **Also Inside:** Cornette vs. Heenan, Petey Williams, 10 unforgettable WrestleMania moments.

**Cover Story—*Inside Wrestling:*** "WrestleMania 21: The *Real* Winners & Losers." **Also Inside:** Alexis Laree, Lance Hoyt, Shane Twins, Jack Evans, Val Venis, Arch Kincaid, Mike Mondo, Alere Littlefeather, Jeff Hammond, O.C. Boyz, Shawn Michaels.

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PWI classic

From the June 1993 issue of *Inside Wrestling*

# THE 100-MATCH WAR

## Vader & Sting's Secret Blood Pact Has Gone Too Far!

Sting and Big Van Vader are in the midst of an incredibly brutal war that threatens to break them both, but neither of them can stop, because they both agreed in writing not to. They refuse to cease until they have battled 100 times!

**By Andy Rodriguez**

THERE WERE ONLY two people in the room. The scene resembled an interrogation: One light shone above a wooden table with two wooden chairs. On the table were a typewritten sheet of paper and two pens.

Barely acknowledging each other's presence, the participants very quietly sat down. One man signed the document. He slid it over to his counterpart. The other man signed. They both silently rose from their seats and left the room.

The signatures belonged to Sting and Big Van Vader. The paper was a pact that would change both their lives forever.

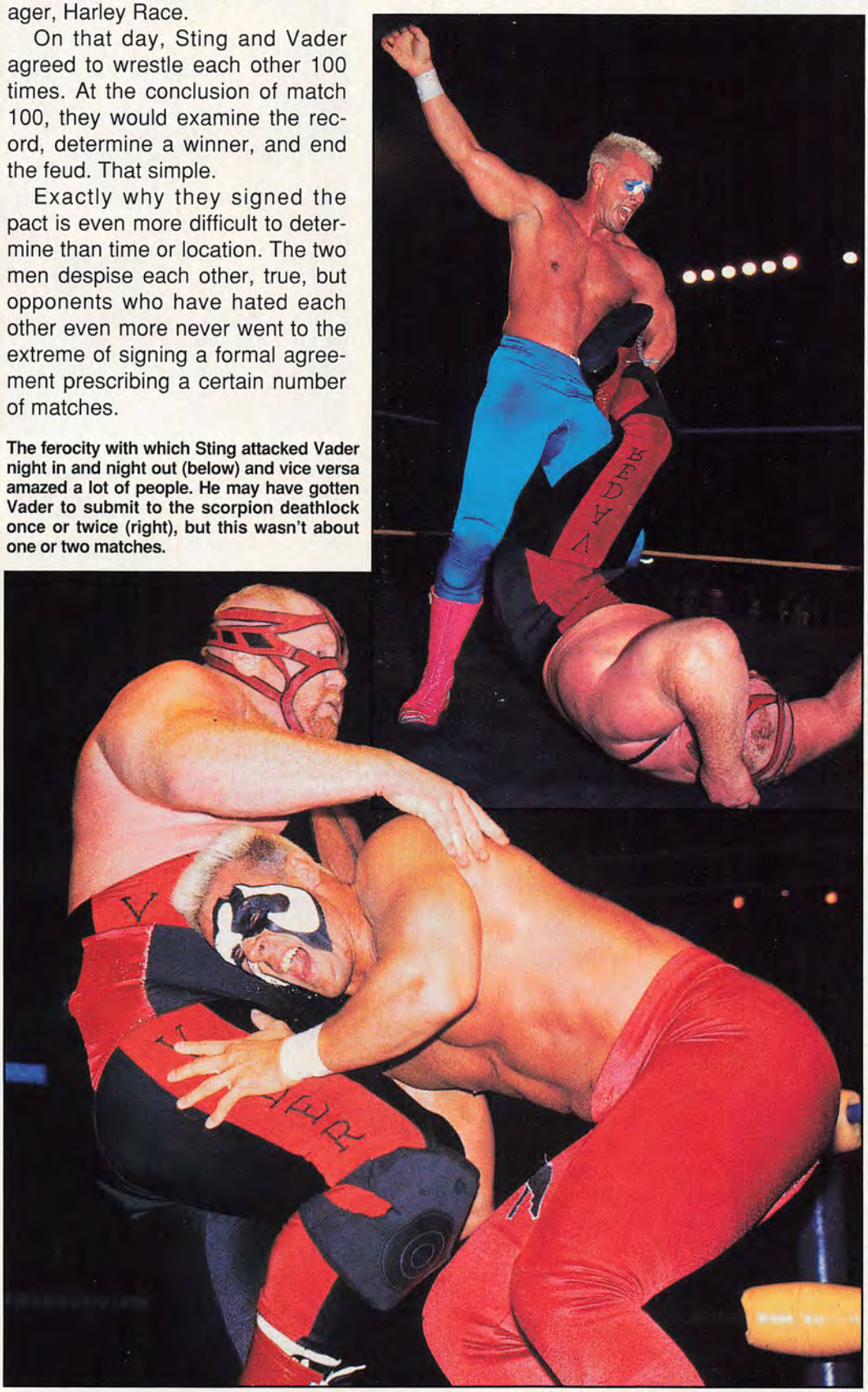
We don't know where the pact

was signed. We don't know when it was signed. We only know that it was signed, thanks to a rare moment of candor from Vader's manager, Harley Race.

On that day, Sting and Vader agreed to wrestle each other 100 times. At the conclusion of match 100, they would examine the record, determine a winner, and end the feud. That simple.

Exactly why they signed the pact is even more difficult to determine than time or location. The two men despise each other, true, but opponents who have hated each other even more never went to the extreme of signing a formal agreement prescribing a certain number of matches.

"Let me say only this," Race stated. "There are things no one but Vader and Sting know about. Things even I don't understand. Leave it at that."



**The ferocity with which Sting attacked Vader night in and night out (below) and vice versa amazed a lot of people. He may have gotten Vader to submit to the scorpion deathlock once or twice (right), but this wasn't about one or two matches.**

Friends and colleagues of both men question the wisdom of such a pact, even though they might not be familiar with all the particulars. After their brutal, nonsanctioned strap match at SuperBrawl III, they are wondering: Can Sting and Vader even make it to 100?

Should they even try?

"That was an absolute bloodbath," said Steve Austin, who wrestled an early bout at SuperBrawl III and watched the Sting-Vader match on a backstage monitor. "I've never seen two guys go at it like that. It was like they were wrestling their last match.

"A hundred matches?" Austin said when asked about the pact. "No, I never heard anything like that. But unless they're close to that, they should consider quitting. It's hard to tell guys like that to quit, but ... I mean, they want to continue their careers, don't they?"

The match indeed was the debacle Austin described. Sting whipped Vader with the strap so hard that he raised bloody welts on Vader's back. Vader bloodied the "Stinger" with thunderous blows to the face. In the heat of the action, Vader cut his right ear, and it bled profusely for the rest of the contest. The wound later required stitches.

## Inside Wrestling ratings

**June 1993**

### WWF

World champion: Bret Hart

1. Shawn Michaels
2. Tatanka
3. The Undertaker
4. Crush
5. Yokozuna
6. Bam Bam Bigelow
7. Kamala
8. Bob Backlund
9. Randy Savage
10. Fatu

### WCW

World champion: Big Van Vader

1. Dustin Rhodes
2. Barry Windham
3. Sting
4. Paul Orndorff
5. 2 Cold Scorpio
6. Cactus Jack
7. Chris Benoit
8. Davey Boy Smith
9. Maxx Payne
10. Rick Steamboat

### TAG TEAMS

1. Rick Steamboat & Shane Douglas
2. Steve Austin & Brian Pillman
3. Ted DiBiase & Irwin R. Schyster
4. Rick & Scott Steiner
5. The Headshrinkers
6. The Moondogs
7. The Heavenly Bodies
8. The Kongs
9. Ron & Don Harris
10. The Rock 'n' Roll Express

### MOST POPULAR

1. The Undertaker
2. Sting
3. Bret Hart
4. Crush
5. Dustin Rhodes
6. Rick Steamboat
7. Tatanka
8. Cactus Jack
9. Davey Boy Smith
10. Randy Savage

### MOST HATED

1. Doink
2. Barry Windham
3. Yokozuna
4. Big Van Vader
5. Shawn Michaels
6. Giant Gonzales
7. Brian Christopher
8. Kevin Sullivan
9. Arn Anderson
10. Ric Flair

That was in addition to the usual strap match mayhem, augmented by the skills of those two supremely talented wrestlers. Wahoo McDaniel, acknowledged as one of the greatest strap match wrestlers ever, watched the encounter on pay-per-view and said he was extremely impressed.

"It was hard for even me to watch, it was so brutal," McDaniel said. "But they weren't just floundering around out there. They both knew what to do with that strap, which makes it even more dangerous."

Danger has been a constant in Sting-Vader battles for the past year. Last April, Sting suffered cracked ribs and a bruised spleen while wrestling Vader at Atlanta's Omni. Three months later to the day, Vader brutalized the "Stinger" to win the WCW World title.

At Starrcade last December, two days before regaining the World belt from Ron Simmons, Vader lost to Sting in the King of Cable Tournament final, yet another encounter in which the combatants brutalized one another to an incredible degree.

Then came the "White Castle Of Fear."

No one—not even Sting or Vader—knows what the next move will be. At the very least, Sting says, there will be no more strap matches.

"We've gone that route before," he stated. "We don't have anything to prove anymore with the strap. That doesn't mean I'm afraid of it; I'm just saying I want the next match on *my* terms. He's World champion, but I have a lot of say in this, too."

"There are many things about the 'White Castle Of Fear' Sting still has not learned," Vader responded. "The strap is only one part of a larger plan. Sting may protest, but he must come to terms with what is

Vader power-bombed Sting into oblivion many a time. The two of them wrestled for the WCW World title often, though something even more important was at stake.

Sting knew full well that the 450-pound Vader had astounding agility. There isn't much you don't know about an opponent you wrestle 100 times.

inevitable. If he can't deal with it, then the road to the hundredth match will be a hellish one indeed. It's time for his people to pity him."

A growing number of people are starting to pity them both. They maintain that the SuperBrawl III strap match proves conclusively it is time for the Sting-Vader feud to end.

They might be right. Sting and Vader are obsessed with one another. Locked in the throes of that obsession, they have lost their perspective. For Vader, the World title has become secondary.

That is not good news for WCW. A champion who disregards the importance of the title belt does a disservice to the entire federation. The situation will only worsen if Vader continues in his war with Sting.

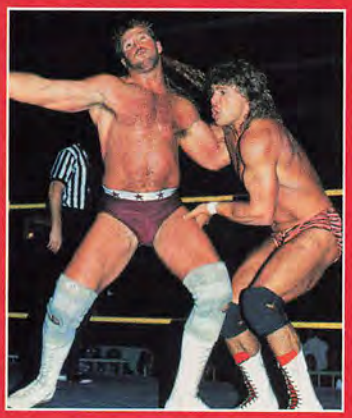
It is time for an end to the hostilities. Or at least to agree to a cease-fire. □

## *Inside Wrestling*, June 1993

**The cover:** Vader and Sting got most of the cover, but Jimmy Hart made it as well. For a very bad reason. The headline noted that we didn't trust "The Mouth Of The South." We weren't buying his fan favorite turn that resulted in him managing Brutus Beefcake and Hulk Hogan in the WWF. We suspected he had ulterior motives. In fact, four of our writers offered their own reasons why Hart was likely still a snake. It took a few years, but he did eventually betray Hogan.

**Two Brodys?:** Perhaps we got a little carried away. But we liked what we saw out of The Bruise Brothers—Ron and Don Harris—when they arrived for their second tour of duty with the USWA much meaner and scarier than they were the first time around. We were very intrigued when manager Bert Prentice compared them to Bruiser Brody because of their ferocity, unpredictability, and independent spirit. The comparison never really took, though. The Harrises got around, but they were no Bruiser Brodys.

**Give It Three Years:** It's become a familiar cry/demand among fans during the last 15 years. Push the smaller guys! Give us a real light heavyweight/cruiserweight division! It was no different in 1993, when Brad Armstrong was stripped of the WCW light heavyweight title, and a tournament to crown a new champ was promised. Fans waited ... and demanded ... and waited. WCW had plenty of talent under the 220-pound limit. More than 80 percent of WCW fans polled by *Inside Wrestling* wanted the title to come back. It finally did—in 1996!



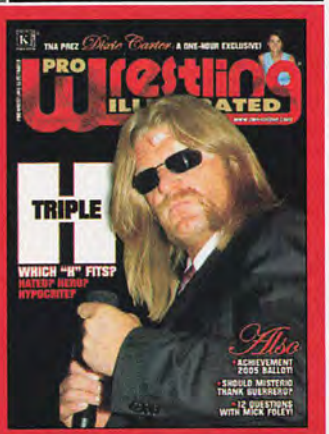
**Clowning Christopher:** Brian Christopher had gotten so frustrated with his inability to knock off the two top stars in the USWA, Jerry Lawler and Jeff Jarrett, that he took drastic action—he called on Doink the Clown to assist him. That meant Lawler and Jarrett had to deal with banana peels left on the floor outside the ring, cooking oil purposely spilled on the floor in an effort to get them to slip, and other silly shenanigans. It led to many people calling Christopher a bigger clown than Doink.

**Steiners As Singles:** Everyone assumed when Rick and Scott Steiner showed up in the WWF that winning the World tag team title was their number-one goal. Indeed it was, only it wasn't necessarily their *only* goal. Rumblings inside the WWF suggested both brothers had their sights set on singles gold, too. We reasoned that Rick would be a good challenger for Shawn Michaels' Intercontinental title, while Scott might want to pursue Bret Hart's World title. Better yet, they could try to win all three of the WWF's major championships.

# between falls

PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED welcomes readers' comments on any of our stories or columns. Send letters to: BETWEEN FALLS Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034
Or you can e-mail your comments to prowrestlingillustrated@yahoo.com
Letters preceded by a ☎ indicate letters left by fans on the *PWI* Hotline (1-900-226-4PWI; see ad elsewhere in this issue).

## HATE MAIL




That's the only way to describe feedback to the cover of our December 2005 edition, featuring Triple-H beside a headline in which we wondered if it was best to describe him as "hated," "hero," or "hypocrite."

Certainly, HHH's brutalization of Ric Flair didn't win him many fans. Neither did his so-called justification of the attack, in which he said Flair had become a shell of his former self.

"If Flair is a shell of what he used to be, what does that say about Triple-H, considering Flair beat him at Taboo Tuesday?" wrote Jen Trabucco of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

"I can think of other 'H' words to describe HHH," wrote Jim Meyer of San Bernardino, California. "How about horrible. Heinous. Hack. I don't think you'd run the rest in a family publication."

However, "The Game" did have a few supporters.

"How about Hall of Famer, as in first ballot," wrote Larry Ransom of Middleport, New York. "Boo him all you like. Hunter has done more in this business than virtually anyone else, and he still has a good decade in front of him."

### THIS YEAR'S FINEST

I am casting my vote for the Samoa Joe-Kenta Kobashi singles match in Ring of Honor as 2005's Match of the Year.

It had to be the most physical, intense match I have ever seen. I always thought the open-hand slap was a pretty tame move—it makes a loud noise, but a slap to the chest is nothing compared to a big bodyslam or punch to the jaw. But Kobashi and Joe literally tore flesh off each other's chests in an incredible match.

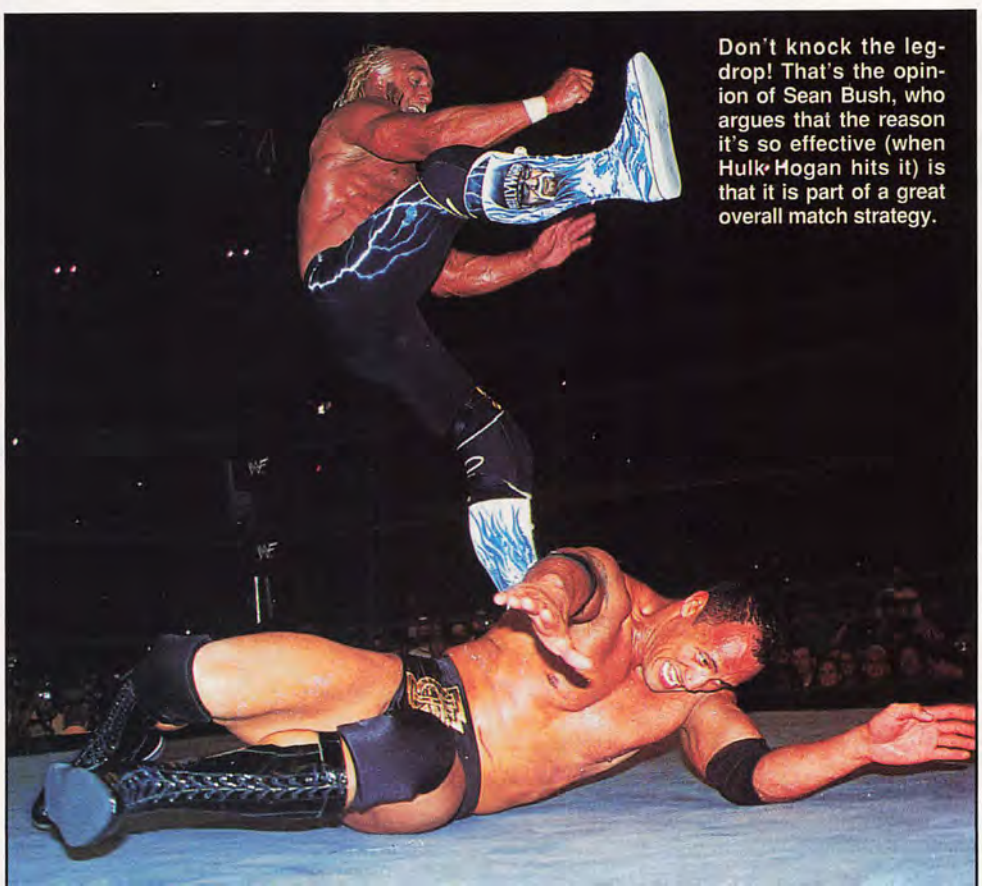
Joe and Kobashi may not be household names like Shawn Michaels and Kurt Angle, but they're world-class athletes. Anyone who considers himself a true wrestling fan owes it to himself to track down a tape of 2005's true Match of the Year.

ERIC HANLEY
Syracuse, NY

### FIVE-STAR LEGDROP?

I'm tired of people saying that Hulk Hogan's legdrop is a weak move. Hogan's legdrop and the way it is used is one of the most intelligent finishers out there. Anyone who says otherwise has lost touch with professional wrestling.

Too many fans see wrestling as a one-move game: Whoever does his finisher first wins. The idea that you can beat someone with a single move is ridiculous. A finisher is supposed to be just that: a finisher, meaning that you finish off your opponent with it, not defeat him with it. Hogan's legdrop is not some magical, devastating maneuver that can beat anyone at any time. Nor has it ever been portrayed as such. No one has ever been beaten early on after being legdropped, because that's not what the legdrop is. It is merely the final blow in a well-conceived plan.



Don't knock the legdrop! That's the opinion of Sean Bush, who argues that the reason it's so effective (when Hulk Hogan hits it) is that it is part of a great overall match strategy.

Although different opponents may require Hogan to alter his strategy slightly, this is how it usually goes: As the match begins, Hogan uses his size and strength advantage with a straight-ahead power assault. This forces opponents to dip into their reserves early, which is key. Hogan then takes a step back and goes on the defensive while the opponent—usually gasping for air by this time—goes on offense.

Believe it or not, it's during this stage that Hogan begins to win the match. Laying down on the mat or up against the ropes, he can rest from the huge assault he just threw. And even though he's now taking a beating, the opponent is using up what's left of his reserves in this attack.

That's when Hogan "Hulks up" and begins mounting his final offensive on the now-helpless opponent. A few punches to put the opponent on the defense, the big boot to stun the opponent and set him up. And then the legdrop. Now if you're laying there exhausted and stunned, and a 300-pound man drops all of his weight across your chest, that's going to knock the wind out of you. As any athlete can tell you, when you get the wind knocked out of you, you are unable to move for several seconds.

It is not the legdrop that opponents fall victim to, but the entire attack plan. There is nothing humiliating about losing in this way.

SEAN BUSH
Theboss1022@hotmail.com

## WHISTLIN' FOR DIXIE

I'd like to congratulate *PWI* and Dan Murphy specifically for doing such an extended and thorough "Press Conference" with TNA President Dixie Carter (December 2005). I'd never even seen a picture of Dixie before I saw your interview. She's really beautiful! Even more important, she gave some very intelligent answers to the questions Murphy asked. It's clear to me that she is working hard to learn about all aspects of the wrestling business, and I was glad to read that she has no interest in being part of the show itself. Although I'm not as high on Jeff Jarrett as a wrestler as she was in the interview, I believe TNA is in good hands with her. The future of that company looks bright.

MIKE ABBOT
Stuart, VA

**Lita spends a lot of her time drooling over Edge these days. Walter Sawyer thinks it's high time she got back into the ring to try to recapture the women's gold.**

## JUST A VALET NOW?

It's been almost a full year since Lita blew out her knee, and we still haven't seen her wrestle again. It doesn't look like she's having problems with it, so why can't she take another run at the women's title? I've been a huge fan of her since she arrived in WWE with Essa Rios. I can't stand watching her come out with Edge every week, and I understand why she is the most hated woman in WWE. But I think everyone would start to respect her again if she got back to wrestling. I still think she could beat Trish—easily!

WALTER SAWYER
Anaheim, CA

## DUDLEY IS STILL A DUDLEY

I have been watching WWE since November 1992 (I have every *PWI* since then as well) and have seen a lot of misused wrestlers, very awful gimmicks, and very strange storylines, but I still make time every week to watch *Raw* and, in more recent years, *Smackdown*. But what has happened in the last month has annoyed me more than anything in the last 12 years and 11 months. I am talking about WWE stopping Brother Ray and Brother Devon from using the Dudley Boyz names, names they have been famous all over the world for using. Why is WWE stopping them when WWE is the one that got rid of them? Does this mean if the likes of A.J Styles, C.M. Punk, and Austin Aries join WWE and get fired later, WWE will try to stop them from using their names as well?

TIMOTHY GARDNER
sheffieldspeedway2005@yahoo.co.uk

## STRAIGHT TO THE POINT

I blinked and missed Rhino's NWA title reign. What has to be done to take that title belt away from Jeff Jarrett for more than a couple of weeks at a time? I love TNA. I just can't stand Jarrett!

AMANDA FLEISCHER
Miami, FL □

## *PWI* Hotline Extra!

### Your answers to our question of the week!

**Question of the Week: Do you want to see Steve Austin face Hulk Hogan at WrestleMania 22? (October 31 to November 4, 2005)**

**Hotline callers respond: "I would have loved to see that match at WrestleMania X7 or X8, but not today," said Craig Allwes of New York City. "Austin's neck isn't in good enough shape for the match to be any good."**

**"That may be the last true dream match in wrestling. I'd love to see it," responded Joe Scarpena of Reno, Nevada. "I bet we could put it right up there with Hogan-Rock as far as the electricity in the arena. Vince McMahon needs to make it happen."**

**"If Austin chickens out and no-shows a match against Coach, I can't see him wanting any piece of Hogan," said Dan Davidson of Boston. "The time for this match has passed."**

# PWI official ratings

**For period ended November 13, 2005**

## TOP 10

1. **JOHN CENA**
   *260, West Newbury, MA*
   **(2) WWE champion**
2. **BATISTA**
   *318, Washington, DC*
   **(1) World champion**
3. **SATOSHI KOJIMA**
   *223, Tokyo, Japan*
   **(4) All-Japan Triple Crown champion**
4. **KURT ANGLE**
   *233, Pittsburgh, PA*
   **(3) No. 1 contender: WWE title**
5. **RANDY ORTON**
   *265, St. Louis, MO*
   **(-) No. 1 contender: World title**
6. **AKIRA TAUE**
   *265, Chichibu, Japan*
   **(-) GHC heavyweight champion**
7. **JEFF JARRETT**
   *230, Nashville, TN*
   **(8) NWA heavyweight champion**
8. **RIC FLAIR**
   *243, Charlotte, NC*
   **(-) WWE Intercontinental champion**
9. **BOOKER T**
   *250, Houston, TX*
   **(-) WWE U.S. champion**
10. **BRYAN DANIELSON**
    *185, Aberdeen, WA*
    **(10) Ring of Honor champion**

Ric Flair

## TAG TEAMS

1. **JOEY MERCURY & JOHNNY NITRO**
   *Combined weight: 417 pounds*
   **(7) WWE Smackdown tag team champions**
2. **MASA CHONO & HIROYOSHI TENZAN**
   *Combined weight: 505 pounds*
   **(-) IWGP International tag team champions**
3. **THE BIG SHOW & KANE**
   *Combined weight: 811 pounds*
   **(-) WWE Raw tag team champions**
4. **CHRIS HARRIS & JAMES STORM**
   *Combined weight: 516 pounds*
   **(4) NWA tag team champions**
5. **ROAD WARRIOR ANIMAL & HEIDENREICH**
   *Combined weight: 591 pounds*
   **(1) No. 1 contenders: WWE Smackdown tag title**
6. **LANCE CADE & TREVOR MURDOCH**
   *Combined weight: 513 pounds*
   **(3) No. 1 contenders: WWE Raw tag title**
7. **JAMAL & TAIYO KEA**
   *Combined weight: 591 pounds*
   **(9) All-Japan International tag team champions**
8. **TEAM 3D**
   *Combined weight: 587 pounds*
   **(10) No. 1 contenders: NWA tag title**
9. **TONY MAMALUKE & SAL RINAURO**
   *Combined weight: 371 pounds*
   **(-) Ring of Honor tag team champions**
10. **CHET THE JET & SETH SKYFIRE**
    *Combined weight: 454 pounds*
    **(-) OVW Southern tag team champions**

## WWE RAW

WWE Champion:
**JOHN CENA**
*(C) 260, West Newbury, MA*

1—**KURT ANGLE** *(1) 233, Pittsburgh, PA*
2—**RIC FLAIR** *(3) 243, Charlotte, NC*
3—**SHAWN MICHAELS** *(2) 217, San Antonio, TX*
4—**TRIPLE-H** *(6) 274, Greenwich, CT*
5—**CARLITO CARIBBEAN COOL** *(7) 220, San Juan, Puerto Rico*
6—**EDGE** *(4) 240, Toronto, Ontario*
7—**CHRIS MASTERS** *(8) 270, Santa Monica, CA*
8—**SHELTON BENJAMIN** *(10) 245, Spartanburg, SC*
9—**ROB CONWAY** *(9) 240, Pittsburgh, PA*
10—**EUGENE** *(-) 226, Jeffersonville, IN*

## WWE SMACKDOWN

World Champion:
**BATISTA**
*(C) 318, Washington, DC*

1—**RANDY ORTON** *(3) 265, St. Louis, MO*
2—**BOOKER T** *(4) 250, Houston, TX*
3—**CHRIS BENOIT** *(1) 224, Edmonton, Alberta*
4—**JOHN B. LAYFIELD** *(5) 306, Roscoe, TX*
5—**REY MISTERIO JR.** *(7) 163, San Diego, CA*
6—**THE UNDERTAKER** *(6) 304, Dallas, TX*
7—**BOBBY LASHLEY** *(9) 255, Topeka, KS*
8—**MATT HARDY** *(-) 220, Cameron, NC*
9—**KEN KENNEDY** *(8) 225, Minneapolis, MN*
10—**JUVENTUD GUERRERA** *(10) 169, Mexico City, Mexico*

## OVW

OVW Champion:
**MATT CAPPOTELLI**
*(-) 220, Norwich, NY*

1—**JOHNNY JETER** *(C) 218, San Diego, CA*
2—**C.M. PUNK** *(7) 220, Chicago, IL*
3—**KEN DOANE** *(1) 210, Louisville, KY*
4—**BRENT ALBRIGHT** *(2) 230, Tulsa, OK*
5—**CHRIS CAGE** *(8) 220, Youngstown, OH*
6—**ELIJAH BURKE** *(6) 230, Jacksonville, FL*
7—**DEUCE SHADE** *(4) 230, Fiji Islands*
8—**AARON STEVENS** *(5) 237, Boston, MA*
9—**THE BOOGEYMAN** *(-) 265, parts unknown*
10—**MIKE MONDO** *(-) 185, Long Island City, NY*

## RING OF HONOR

ROH Champion:
**BRYAN DANIELSON**
*(C) 185, Aberdeen, WA*

1—**RODERICK STRONG** *(2) 205, Tampa, FL*
2—**A.J. STYLES** *(7) 202, Gainesville, GA*
3—**HOMICIDE** *(6) 220, Brooklyn, NY*
4—**NIGEL McGUINNESS** *(1) 220, London, England*
5—**B.J. WHITMER** *(-) 215, Owensboro, KY*
6—**CHRISTOPHER DANIELS** *(3) 210, Los Angeles, CA*
7—**AUSTIN ARIES** *(9) 202, Milwaukee, WI*
8—**COLT CABANA** *(5) 235, Chicago, IL*
9—**MATT SYDAL** *(-) 174, St. Louis, MO*
10—**CLAUDIO CASTAGNOLI** *(-) 238, Lucerne, Switzerland*

**Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue. while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.**

**AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION: Champion**—Steve Corino; **1**—Shinjiro Otani; **2**—Mark Jindrak; **3**—Ric Converse; **4**—Takao Omori; **5**—Al Snow; **6**—Nickie Sixx; **7**—Matt Morgan; **8**—Wavell Starr; **9**—Mana; **10**—Dallas Page.

**BAD 2 THE BONE WRESTLING: Champion**—Chet Robbins; **1**—J.C. Bailey; **2**—Simon Sezz; **3**—Todd Morton; **4**—Billy Black; **5**—Man Slaughter; **6**—Randy Royal; **7**—Vic the Bruiser; **8**—Max Mizery; **9**—Brent Goodin; **10**—K-Lo.

**CHAOTIC WRESTLING: Champion**—Handsome Johnny; **1**—Thomas Penmanship; **2**—Brian Milonas; **3**—John Walters; **4**—Luis Ortiz; **5**—Chase Del Monte; **6**—Arch Kincaid; **7**—Fred Sampson; **8**—Max Bauer; **9**—Psycho; **10**—Craig Stratton.

**CHIKARA: Champion**—Shane Storm; **1**—Gran Akuma; **2**—Mike Quackenbush; **3**—Claudio Castagnoli; **4**—Milano Collection AT; **5**—Chris Hero; **6**—Larry Sweeney; **7**—Jigsaw; **8**—Hallowicked; **9**—Eddie Kingston; **10**—Skayde.

**EAST COAST WRESTLING ASSOCIATION: Champion**—Fred Sampson; **1**—Chase Del Monte; **2**—Cheetah Master; **3**—Mike Kruel; **4**—Freak Nasty; **5**—Mega; **6**—Andrew Ryker; **7**—Scotty Charisma; **8**—Japanese Pool Boy; **9**—Aden Chambers; **10**—Shawn Patrick.

**IWA FLASHFIRE: Champion**—Don Matthews; **1**—War Machine Tank; **2**—Golden Eagle; **3**—Phillip Pain; **4**—War Machine Nitro; **5**—Lance Christopher; **6**—Eric Thunder; **7**—The Executioner; **8**—Sgt. Grimm; **9**—Xion the Heretic; **10**—Tommy Sawyer.

**NATIONAL INDEPENDENT CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion**—Ken Steel; **1**—Chris Collins; **2**—Mike Slaughter; **3**—Larry Moravec; **4**—Wyld Chyld; **5**—Shawn Christian; **6**—Dustin Daniels; **7**—Ravage Lee; **8**—Kasper O'Neil; **9**—Buffalo Frits; **10**—KnightStalker.

**NORTHWIND CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion**—Storm; **1**—Tiger Allen; **2**—Kodiak; **3**—Terry Alan; **4**—Jason Strong; **5**—Shane Michaels; **6**—Eclipse; **7**—Maddawg; **8**—Sweet Daddy Cain; **9**—Todd Rotten; **10**—Bobby Bass.

**NWA VIRGINIA: Champion**—Damian Wayne; **1**—Brandon Day; **2**—Fergall Devitt; **3**—Scotty Blaze; **4**—Preston Quinn; **5**—Frank Parker; **6**—Chris Dramen; **7**—Mike Vaughn; **8**—Sean Lei; **9**—Beef; **10**—Dirty Money.

**SUMMIT WRESTLING ASSOCIATION: Champion**—Nikolai Volkoff; **1**—Leslie Leatherman; **2**—Sean Patrick; **3**—Joseph Brooks; **4**—Steve the Teacher; **5**—Chucky Wynn; **6**—Tank Thomas; **7**—Lance McIntyre; **8**—C.A. Elliott; **9**—John Kermon; **10**—Nicolas Tide.

**WARD FAMILY PROMOTIONS: Champion**—Title Vacant; **1**—Jerry Lawler; **2**—Kip James; **3**—Al Snow; **4**—Maven; **5**—Bob Orton Jr.; **6**—Dusty Rhodes; **7**—Rodney Mack; **8**—Mikey Batts; **9**—The Patriot; **10**—Bill Dundee.

**WORLD CLASS EXTREME WRESTLING: Champion**—DJ P-Roc; **1**—Aaron Devil; **2**—Ali Steele; **3**—Robert Sheryl; **4**—Justin Feeche; **5**—SLICK; **6**—PITT; **7**—Tyrone Knox; **8**—Johnny Lightning; **9**—Ace Crusader; **10**—Joe Kool.

## NWA

NWA Champion:
**JEFF JARRETT**
*(C) 230, Nashville, TN*

**1—RHINO**
*(2) 275, Detroit, MI*
**2—A.J. STYLES**
*(1) 202, Gainesville, GA*
**3—RAVEN**
*(4) 243, Short Hills, NJ*
**4—ABYSS**
*(3) 295, Cincinnati, OH*
**5—CHRIS HARRIS**
*(–) 232, Fort Wright, KY*
**6—MONTY BROWN**
*(10) 268, Detroit, MI*
**7—SAMOA JOE**
*(6) 270, American Samoa*
**8—JEFF HARDY**
*(5) 212, Cameron, NC*
**9—RICKY MURDOCH**
*(9) 261, Houston, TX*
**10—TOMMY MARR**
*(8) 215, St. Petersburg, FL*

## TNA

NWA Champion:
**JEFF JARRETT**
*(C) 230, Nashville, TN*

**1—A.J. STYLES**
*(1) 202, Gainesville. GA*
**2—RHINO**
*(5) 275, Detroit, MI*
**3—PETEY WILLIAMS**
*(–) 180, Windsor, Ontario*
**4—SAMOA JOE**
*(8) 270, American Samoa*
**5—MONTY BROWN**
*(4) 268, Detroit, MI*
**6—CHRISTOPHER DANIELS**
*(3) 210, Los Angeles, CA*
**7—ABYSS**
*(7) 295, Cincinnati, OH*
**8—JEFF HARDY**
*(9) 212, Cameron, NC*
**9—LANCE HOYT**
*(–) 295, Dallas, TX*
**10—SABU**
*(–) 220, Bombay, India*

## JAPAN

**1—SATOSHI KOJIMA**
*(1) 223, Tokyo, Japan*
*All-Japan Triple Crown champion*
**2—AKIRA TAUE**
*(–) 265, Chichibu, Japan*
*GHC heavyweight champion*
**3—BROCK LESNAR**
*(2) 297, Minneapolis, MN*
*IWGP heavyweight champion*
**4—KAZUYUKI FUJITA**
*(4) 253, Funabashi, Japan*
**5—MASA CHONO**
*(8) 235, Tokyo, Japan*
**6—KEIJI MUTO**
*(7) 245, Yamanishi, Japan*
**7—BLACK TIGER**
*(6) 175, Havana, Cuba*
**8—TAKESHI RIKIOH**
*(3) 286, Sakurai, Japan*
**9—AKEBONO**
*(–) 516, Oahu, HI*
**10—KENTA KOBASHI**
*(5) 282, Fukuchiyama, Japan*

## MEXICO

**1—EL HIJO DEL SANTO**
*(3) 180, Tulancingo, Mexico*
**2—MISTICO**
*(2) 194, Mexico City, Mexico*
**3—ATLANTIS**
*(8) 180, Guadalajara, Mexico*
**4—DR. WAGNER JR.**
*(7) 215, Mexico City, Mexico*
**5—KONNAN**
*(6) 235, Mexico City, Mexico*
**6—ULTIMO GUERRERO**
*(1) 173, Mexico City, Mexico*
**7—VAMPIRO**
*(–) 220, Thunder Bay, Ontario*
**8—PERRO AGUAYO JR.**
*(10) 165, Zacatecas, Mexico*
**9—LATIN LOVER**
*(–) 216, Monterrey, Mexico*
**10—MR. AGUILA**
*(–) 187, Tijuana, Mexico*

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By Jason Conlan

My mother was right, It was only a matter of time before some blonde with a fat ass showed up and turned my head.
VADER TIME
OK, I see the mask, and I see the stars... But I have yet to see anything "super" about you...
mister J.
I know he's just some stray you found, but I think it's time we get that cat "fixed"...
PUMA
mister J.
I know it's something you just threw on, but between you and me Lita, you just about missed...
mister J.

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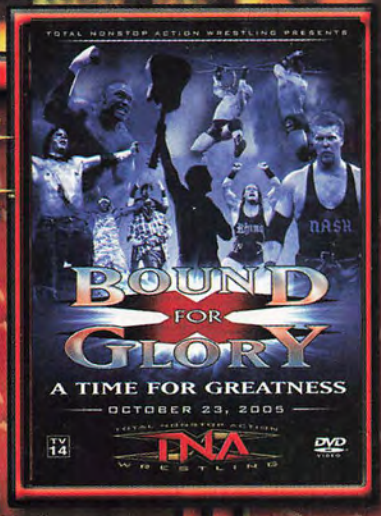


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